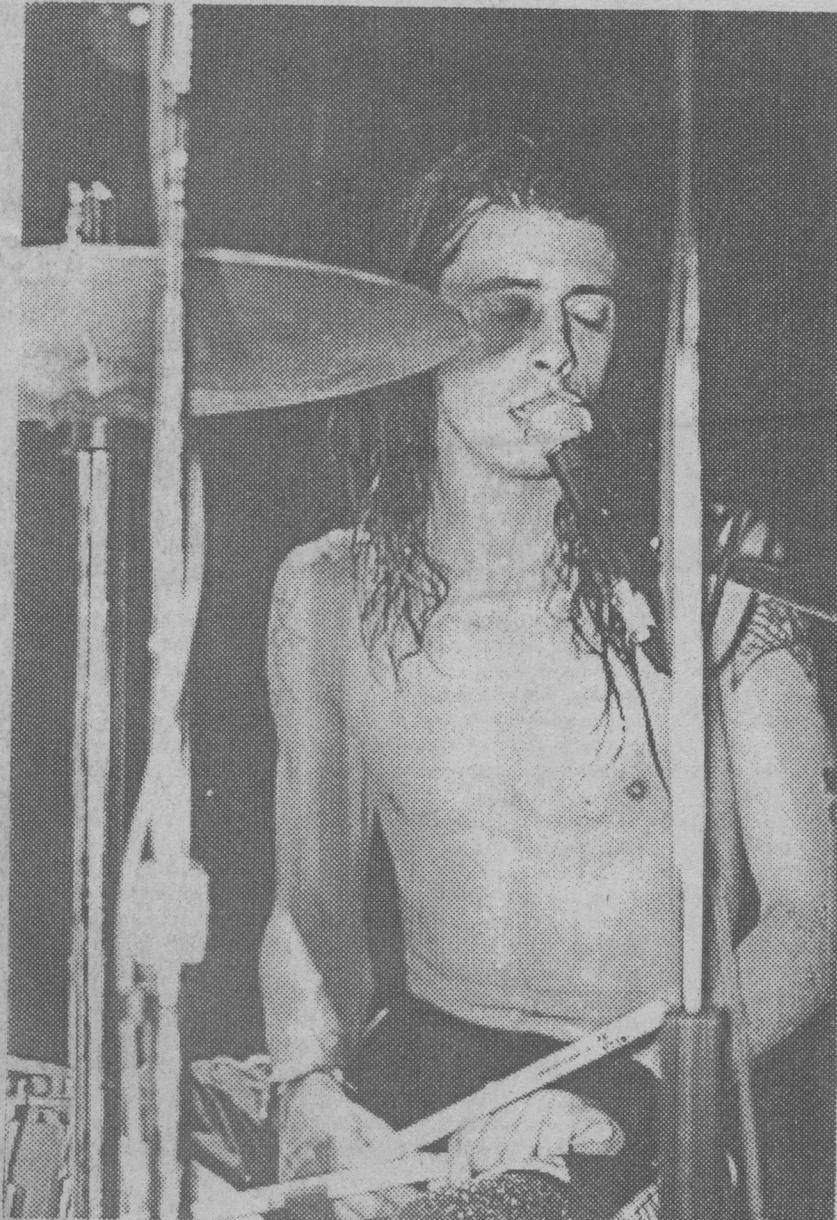


#45

Winter 1992

JERSEY BEAT

\$2



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418 Gregory Ave Weehawken NJ 07087

Issue #45 Winter 92

ON THE COVER: Nirvana's David Grohl Photo by Johnny Puke

Records, tapes and videos reviewed in this issue were received during the period from Sept. 1, 1991, to January 1, 1992. We welcome all submissions and are always looking for new writers, as long as you understand that we can't pay you and you know what the word deadline means. (You do get to keep the free records and tapes.)

READ THIS PART!!!

We do not review cassettes if the material is available on another format (CD or vinyl.) However, we do review demo tapes and cassette-only releases (such as ROIR tapes). Advance cassettes are fine as long as they are followed eventually by the real mccoy. If you're a small label (or a big label with a small promo budget) and can't afford to send anything but cassettes, let us know and we'll work it out.

As we enter what will be Jersey Beat's 10th year (next time will be the anniversary issue), a few random thoughts...

First of all, those of you who've been here before will have noticed that our glossy cover has become a victim of the recession. Advertising is down, last issue didn't sell for shit, and we just couldn't afford the extra \$300 that the glossy cover costs. So keep a couple of kleenex handy while you're reading this issue to wipe the ink off your hands.

Every year, like six hundred and some odd other rock critics, I get to vote in the Village Voice's annual "Pazz & Jop Poll," a glorified top-ten list that's more interesting for what it says about rock criticism than what it says about rock music. This year was the first time since probably 1984 or so (when indie labels and the "alternative" rock and roll underground came of age) when the majority of my favorite albums were on major labels. That's kind of sad. It reflects the fact that the major label feeding frenzy over cool bands has left very slim pickin's for the indies; just a few years ago, bands like Nirvana, School Of Fish, Material Issue, Teenage Fan Club, Firehouse, Eleventh Dream Day and the like would have released their 1991 albums on labels like TwinTone or Touch & Go, not DGC and Atlantic and Capitol. It makes it that much more important to support the independent labels that are left, and salute those bands who have stayed independent even when the big money has called.

So here we are in 1992. At least this year is starting off better than last. I'd rather face a presidential election than a war, especially since - given Bush's plummeting popularity and his seemingly self-destructive inability to do anything about it - there's a chance the good guys might actually win this one. There are two little things you can do this year to help make that possible; register, and vote. If that's too much trouble, go somewhere else and complain about the mess we're in, ok?

One thing I learned from Operation: Desert Storm: No more topical editorials.

For the tenth anniversary issue, I was thinking of doing a sort of "Where Are They Now" feature. So if you were in a band, ran a club, did a fanzine, or were active in the scene back in 1982, please get in touch. And if anyone knows how I can find Joe Foy or Johnny Dirt, please write in.

That's it till next time, buckaroos. Hope you like the issue. Keep those cards and letters coming and, if you have an extra ten bucks kicking around, why not buy a Jersey Beat Video Fanzine and help support the cause?

Jim Testa - Editor & Publisher

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Photographers - Michele Taylor, Sam Lahoz, Johnny Puke, Jim Testa

- Jim Testa
February, 1992

Guest Editorial

BREEDING CRIMINALS

By Todd Smith

A man I know was released from this prison a few hours ago. An extremely dangerous man. And although I know I can watch any news broadcast and hear about similar people, I'm finding it intensely fascinating that I know this person, as though it's happening in slow motion...the whole situation breaking down into powerful moments of realization. And that I'm the only one aware of it...

Oh, don't worry. When this unit malfunctions, it won't be anything as dramatic as a mass killing at McDonalds or a string of brutal sex crimes.

No. It will more likely be something like a string of basically petty crimes. No headlines here.

But underneath the surface of what appears to be just another selfish person, too lazy to work for what he wants and needs, is what I believe is the truth.

And that truth is elusive. And complex.

But I can ASSURE you that a basic foundation of that truth is that NO human is happy in prison -- and in fact, HATES it. And would do anything to stay free and lead a "normal" life.

So then, why do so many people just out of prison revert back to a life of crime? Again, another complex question. And again, a partial but basic answer: Because they don't have the knowledge and skills within them to act in a manner to stay free.

To someone who has never spent time in prison, it may all seem simple. It's easy to stay free, right?

Then WHY is the recidivism rate so incredibly high? Why do people spend their lives in and out of jails & prisons?

Is it something as simple as genetics? That criminals are born and all you can do is lock them up for the protection of society, that they'll never change...?

No, that is NOT the answer. And although I have no degrees in any field, including criminology, I have knowledge and insights that no college can provide. For I AM one of the criminals that I'm writing about.

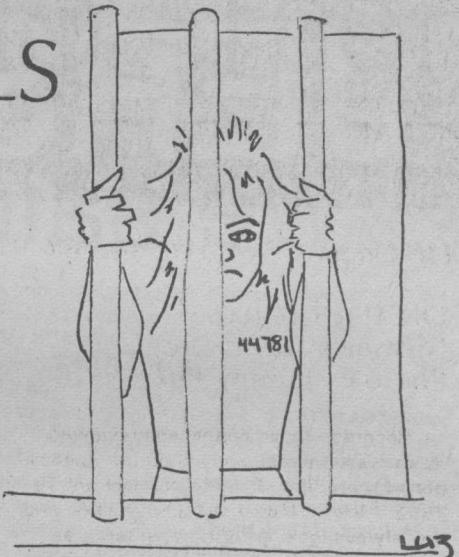
Criminals are BRED. The prisons across the country and world are actually BREEDING criminals.

I've FELT myself being bred. I've felt the changes over the years. That may sound insane - and it should, because it is - but it's also the truth.

The reason I'm writing this? It's a culmination of all I've gone through and have become. You might say this is being written by YOU - all of you. Society.

I'm not writing this for fun or out of boredom. I'm not writing it for money.

In fact, I'm not even writing it out of choice.



I have to write this. NEED to write it. I want change. DEMAND change.

I mean, FUCK, it's 1992. We are an intelligent race of people and we have so failed each other that there are thousands and thousands of men and women and children WASTING away and living pain-filled lives in the cages we've built to keep them. And if you really don't give a fuck about the people in cages who you really don't know anyway, how about a more realistic and personal approach? The people who are in cages today WILL be released from them eventually - just like the one I know today was. He'll move into somebody's neighborhood. He'll move into somebody's. So if you're not concerned about this subject out of compassion and a need for betterment of our society, then get concerned out of selfish self-preservation. I don't care how the concern is instilled. Just get it.

All this talk. Yes, there's a problem. We all know that. How about solutions?

The first thing is to OBLITERATE this feeling that we have all the opportunities in the world to "change our ways" once we are incarcerated through schooling and counseling and drug programs.

This may sound absolutely ridiculous, but there is NO DOUBT in my mind that there are individuals who could sue the penal system for DAMAGES. For RUINING them, by placing them in an environment that is so negative and corrupt that no one could possibly better themselves during their stay. And I'm sure there will come a time in the near future when some state's corrections dept. and the sentencing court are taken to court for negligence and failure to provide an environment conducive to positive change.

I'll never forget the day the judge sentenced me to 14 years. She said she "hopes that after my stay there I can come out into society a much better person."

And then she places me HERE.

Yeah, I watched a man walk out of here today. Guess I'll watch the news...

1991. - Oh no, we said too much

Jim Testa

CORPORATE TOP 5

Nirvana - Nevermind
 Teenage Fan Club - Bandwagonesque
 EMF - Schubert Dip
 P.M. Dawn - Of The Heart...
 Neds Atomic Dustbin - God Fodder

DEMO TAPES

Noise Culture (2nd demo)
 Wax - And Slurpees For All...
 Freak Beans
 Jerry Kitzrow & Wild Honey
 Scooby Groove (2nd demo)

REISSUES

Ramones - All The Stuff & More (Part II)
 Roky Erickson - You're Gonna Miss Me
 Soulside - Soon-Come-Happy
 Bob Dylan - Bootleg Series Vols. 1-3
 Green Day - 1039/Smoothed Out Slappy Hours

ALTERNATIVE TOP 10

Screeching Weasel - My Brain Hurts
 Eleventh Dream Day - Lived To Tell
 Superchunk - No Pocky For Kitty
 Robyn Hitchcock - Perspex Island
 Chris Stamey - Fireworks
 Slint - Spiderland
 School Of Fish
 Samiam - Soar
 Poster Children - Flower Power
 Field Trip - Ripe

LIVE BANDS

Superchunk
 Loose
 American Standard
 Ned's Atomic Dustbin
 Buzzcocks



Craig Donner

LAW & ORDER - Rites Of Passage LP
 PSYCHEFUNKAPUS - Skin LP
 FISHBONE - The Reality Of My Surroundings LP
 KIX - Hotwire LP
 MALEVOLENT CREATION - The 10 Commandments LP
 LUCY BROWN LP
 TRIBE AFTER TRIBE LP
 HARD CORPS - Def Before Dishonor LP
 LAST CRACK - Burning Time LP
 MINISTRY - "Jesus Built My Hot Rod" 7-inch

John Lisa

1. PHLEG CAMP - "Bully My Pushy" 7" (Allied)
2. NATION OF ULYSSES - 13 Pt Program CD (Dischord)
3. 23 MORE MINUTES/LOGICAL NONSENSE - Split LP (Very Small)
4. SCHERZO - Suffering & Joy LP (Lookout)
5. FURY - "Resurrection" 7" (THD)
6. DEMISE - 10" EP (Core Only)
7. POISON IDEA - "Punish Me" 7" (American Leather)
8. VOIVOD - Angel Rat LP
9. GRAY MATTER - Double 7" (Dischord)
10. BIG DRILL CAR - Batch LP (Cruz)

Tom Angelli

BIMSKALABIM - How's It Going LP
 INSIDE OUT - No Spiritual Surrender 7"
 JAWBOX - Gripe LP
 FLAG OF DEMOCRACY - Down With People LP
 SUPERTOUCH - The Earth Is Flat LP
 FURY - "Resurrection" 7"
 DEVIATORS - Century 21 EP
 VERBAL ASSAULT - On EP
 V/A - Brouhaha EP
 JELLO/NOMEANSNO - The Sky Is Falling... LP



S U B U R B A N

BOHEMIA

P R O D U C T I O N S

FOLLOWING THE NOISE SCENE

by Bruce Lee Gallanter

Both legendary and somewhat unknown, Sick Dick & The Volkswagens, a NY noise/punk quartet, must have tortured a bunch of jaded ears from '79 through '81. Ten years later, some little cassette company from Ohio has finally released INTERFERENCE, a gem of cosmic sludge. Although rare, there are times when low-end technology, cheap distortion and feedback can actually create something more unique than the sum of any of the parts. Just what makes up this mess are distant electric bass distorts, squawking sax, twisted atonal guitar blasts and cheap electronic sci-fi soundtrack synth, with some vocals so obnoxious that you got to love 'em! Time begins to warp as the machines start to slow down. Sorta like Hawkwind played by the Portsmith Sinfonia, but more primitive. They do rock out in their own weird way, yet the mass/mess is more molten, with that Flipper-esque fudge. What I like best about Sick Dick's sound is that it is so bent that it seems as if there are parts missing, so you have to use your imagination to fill in the missing ingredients. Definitely difficult, but way cool.

While self-appointed musicrits often remind us how barren the 70's were as far as interesting music is concerned, they always neglect to mention that early jazz-rock and progressive rock began pointing out a future for rock music in that decade. In the U.S., bands like Miles Davis, the Mothers of Invention, and Mahavishnu Orchestra pointed the way, and in the U.K., it was Soft Machine, King Crimson, Yes and Gentle Giant. By the end of the 70's much of this music became predictable, just another part of the mainstream. Still, this music thrived in the U.K. with another wave of prog-rock in Henry Cow, Hatfield, The North, and Gong, soon followed by a larger wave of Euro progressive units like Magma, Univers Zoo, and Art Zoyd.

While some of this music still exists today (Art Zoyd just did their first U.S. concert this past year), it's more common in Europe; in the U.S., progressive rock is quite rare. Still, there is an American label called Cuneiform that specializes in bands of this nature. Check out their roster: Biota, Thinking Plague, Curlew, U-Totem, Forever Einstein, and Dr. Nerve, all highly recommended.

I'm please to report on a new local progressive unit, whose 3-song demo really knocked me out. THE DEVIL'S BREAKFAST currently hail from NYC, and feature Carlo Nicolau on violin and keybs (from the legendary Mexican progrockers Nazca), Carlos Vivanco on guitars, Keith Macksound on el. bass (from local power trio Digital Cream), and Fred Katz on drums (from Seeing The Elephant, and playing/composing such music for dance). The demo also utilizes the talents of Elliot Levin (from Philly's finest jazz/rock combo, New Ghost) on tenor sax and musette.

Too often, prog rock is criticized for being too bombastic and pretentious. This is certainly not the case with The Devil's Breakfast. Their music is just the opposite - warm, challenging, well-constructed, actually closer to classical music in structure. Parts remind me of Art Zoyd - haunting, but never too dark. Solos are not that important; unlike tired fusion, the structure and overall mood of the piece is what stands out. The production is

also well done, nice job of layering Elliot's double-reed musette, giving it that snake charmer-like eeriness. "Adrift" falls somewhere between Crimson and Henry Cow, with its playful, refined rhythm team and that austere violin and soprano sax duo on top. A very impressive first offering!

Word is that MuWorks is considering putting out their first full length lp.

There was a certain era in modern jazz that I really miss. After about a decade of Art Blakey's and Horace Silver's ensembles playing their distinctive rhythmic brew (an opening theme followed by solos and then that opening them re-stated), what happened next was certain players and composers started writing more interesting charts for their soloists. McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, and Stanley Cowell (to name a few) spent more time composing challenging charts for their ensembles. It was time for younger composers to continue the lessons learned from the great composers of old, like Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus. It was the late 60s/early 70's era when this type of composing was developing.

It takes a mature composer to come up with writing which challenges the abilities of his players, so the pieces themselves can stand out as strong and unique music. Today, twenty years later, I hear this type of composing not often enough. And finding it from a new, talented, New York City ensemble is rarer still. Yet this is the case with the superb tape I recently received from drummer-composer Franklin Kiermayer.

This four-song offering is a winner. I just hope some record label (probably European) is smart enough to put this music out and promote it correctly.

Montreal-bred Kiermayer has put together a perfect mix of musicians. I am amazed that with the hundreds of jazz players in and around NYC I have heard, I am unfamiliar with their names.



Still, Kiermayer informed me that a few of them come from classical backgrounds. Only pianist Peter Madsen gets any solo space, pulling off a great McCoy Tyner-ish two-handed solo on the opening piece, "Ahamkara." No less amazing are Kiermayer's smoking drums on this piece. What stands out most is the excellent compositions - warm, glowing, distinctive harmonies for trumpet, trombone, horn and even tuba. Much of this music has a calm, slow burn quality, just the right amount of spaciousness. Yet they know when to erupt. This is the most impressive debut I've heard in a long while. Their first gigs in NYC are upcoming, so get ready.

There's one in every crowd. That one person, living outside the rules most of us inevitably adhere to. Often it's an artist/visionary - someone who creates their own world and through their art allows others to observe their view. While I was attending Glassboro College from '72-'76, THAT person was John Emmons - painter, poet, performer, and revolutionary at a time when the 60's dream was beginning to fade. Many on campus thought him crazed, loud, and shaman-like, yet no one could deny the power of his murals, which adorn large areas of the Glassboro campus. John and I became friends; I was intrigued by his artwork, penetrating eyes, and unique view of life.

Few of us realized when a riveting performer/poet he was until his going-away spectacle at Glassboro in '75 - a startling stream of poetry, long psychedelic/jazz jams and layers of John's art on slides superimposed on the band, wall and ceilings. A real happening! Within a year, he produced an extraordinary one-month exhibition at a gallery space on West Broadway. It was overwhelming, from his huge Jackson Pollock-like explosive paintings to his small, layered plexiglass squares painted with pins. Always the extremes. It's difficult to forget tripping at this closing Halloween party, crazy musicians screaming

everywhere and everyone's face painted by John as they entered. Those were the days...

I lost contact with John for about ten years after this, but he contacted me out of the blue when he was living in San Diego, singing with and managing local rock bands. After that, he moved back to the Camden/Philly area where he taught at Rutgers-Camden, continuing to refine his own art and poetry.

He was also doing occasional solo gigs on electric guitar and jamming with some of Philly's finest. He played the Knitting Factory and the Court Tavern and even that cynic Gerard Cosloy dug his demo. He moved back to San Diego again last year, but grew restless for inspiration and went traveling to the Grand Canyon, and Taos, New Mexico. He is presently residing in Las Vegas, doing poetry readings and jamming with local musicians. Finally, he is about to release his first book of poetry and drawings.

The current crew John works with are called the Dark Lords Of Vegas, and their recently recorded demo was premiered on a Vegas radio show entitled "Difficult Listening." But in actuality, it's not all that difficult.

It is sparse, relaxed space music made by synth, guitar synthesizers and sampler, with John's subtle psychedelic guitar and distinctive poetry on top. It's balanced by a female voice - Felix Rex - who quotes Engels and Faulkner. John's poems have become more focused, easier to penetrate, yet no less thought-provoking. What I like most about this tape is its melodic center, often neglected in synth music. Although it feels improvised, the musicians are sympathetic to one another, with selective, slowly built soundscapes. Topics covered include the illusion of TV beauty, the victims of diets, and the burning up of our environment. Reminds me at points of my occasional unit, Suburban Bohemia, only more refined. By the time you read this, there will probably be copies of John Emmons' first book of poetry on sale at the Downtown Music Gallery in NYC, where I work. You have been forewarned...



JAWBOX

Records & Stuff We Sell:

- 61. JAWBOX 2 song 7" (A)
- 62. NATION OF ULYSSES 3 song 7" (A)
- 60. FUGAZI 'Steady Diet of Nothing' t* (C)
- 59. HOLY ROLLERS 'Fabuley' & 'As Is' CD (E)
- 58. HOLY ROLLERS 'Fabuley' t (C)
- 57. NATION OF ULYSSES '13-Point Program' t* (C)
- 56. HIGH-BACK CHAIRS 'Of Two Minds' t* (C)
- 55. SHUDDER TO THINK 'No Sh*t & Ten Spots' (E)
- 54. SHUDDER TO THINK 'Funeral at the Movies' t (B)
- 53. DAG NASTY 'Can I Say' & 'Wig Out at Denko's' CD (E)
- 52. JAWBOX 'Grippe' t* (C)
- 51. SOULSIDE Combines 2 LPs and 7" (E)
- 50. SKEWBALD/GRAND UNION (A)
- 49. GRAY MATTER CD (48 & 'Take It Back') (E)
- 16. RITES OF SPRING CD/LP/CS t* (C)

t Also available as cassette *Available as CD, price code (C)

Price Guide, including postage, in U.S. \$:

	<u>U.S.A.</u>	<u>SURFACE & CANADA</u>	Airmail
(A) 7"	3.00	4.00	6.00
(B) 12" EP	6.00	8.00	11.00
(C) LP	7.00	9.00	12.00
(D) CD	8.00	9.00	11.00
(E) MaxiCD	10.00	11.00	13.00

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PELL MELL 7" - A cover that vaguely resembles a table clot pretty much gives away the musical contents of this single - lame, limp-wristed lite-rock that wouldn't cause a single eyebrow to be raised if it were played in the local K-Mart alongside other such classics as the 101 Strings version of "Papa Don't Preach." The first side is the worst offender, with the drums barely audible above the sensitively reverb'd guitars, while the flipside puts a bit more oomph in the mix via a somewhat driving drumbeat and interesting guitar work with actual power chords popping up occasionally. Vocals are conspicuously absent on both sides, making this even less saleable than, say, a Painted Willie/Toto double album, leading me to wonder just how many blow jobs the band had to give the poobahs at SST before they'd put this out. (SST, PO Box 1, Lawndale CA 90260)

SKINYARD/LOVESLUG Split 7" - The Skin Yard side of this single has a cool bass line. The Loveslug side has a cool guitar line. If they had somehow pressed both songs onto one side while getting rid of the wailing rock 'n roll Skin Yard vocals and the mongoloidally stupid Loveslug lyrics ("You call this beer?/This is chemical warfare") then this wouldn't be bad. As it is, the Loveslug side is about ten times better due to the mildly crunchy guitar and non-wail vocals. (Rave, PO Box 40075, Philadelphia PA 19106)

SAD SACK - Heinous Bitch 7" - The back cover of this single depicts a cornucopia of illicit chemical delights ranging from strange-looking home-rolled cigarettes to crack pipes to what looks like empty asthma medicine containers filled with Drano and insect repellent, for that ultimate household substance high. After exposing themselves to this many chemicals, it would seem difficult for these bad boys of rock n roll to even pick up their instruments, let alone play them worth two shits in a pisspot. The vocalist in particular seems to have fallen pretty to this, as his voice sounds like he's taken to gargling with sulfuric acid as his drug of choice. The first side is fairly catchy, noisy sloppy shit with a crappy drum machine, while the chant-along chorus of "Heinous bitch! Fucking witch!" is a true example of the poetry these boys are capable of. The second side is basically more of the same, sans the stick-in-your-head guitar line.

BLUE 7" - If the singer for this band had his vocal cords slit, this record would have been ten times better, as his phlegmy out of tune yowling severely detracts from the otherwise catchy, noisy rock. The guitar line in "Back Seat of My Nova" is particularly sticky. (ERL, 418 Madison Ave, Albany NY 12210)

DEMISE "All Of This For Nothing" 7" - Basic, "socially aware" fast hardcore with some personal lyrics but not many mosh parts. Comes with a collage/lyric book. "Total Fucking Ch@os!" (2401 W Layton, Milwaukee WI 53221)

VARIOUS ARTISTS - "Bleaaauurrgghh! The Record"
Back when I was a wee lad, the Dead Kennedys' "I Like Short Songs" was one of my least favorite tunes, oddly enough, as I did like short songs and wished there were more available for my pristine ears to enjoy. My limited attention span, brought on by too many hours of MTV and Smurfs-watching forced me to lift the needle off of any song, no matter how enjoyable, at about the two minute mark anyway, and so I wished that bands would learn to just cut themselves off, so as not to wear on my thin patience. The reason I so disliked the DK song was because it seemed to mock the institution of short songs, which I so coveted. So when this compilation came in

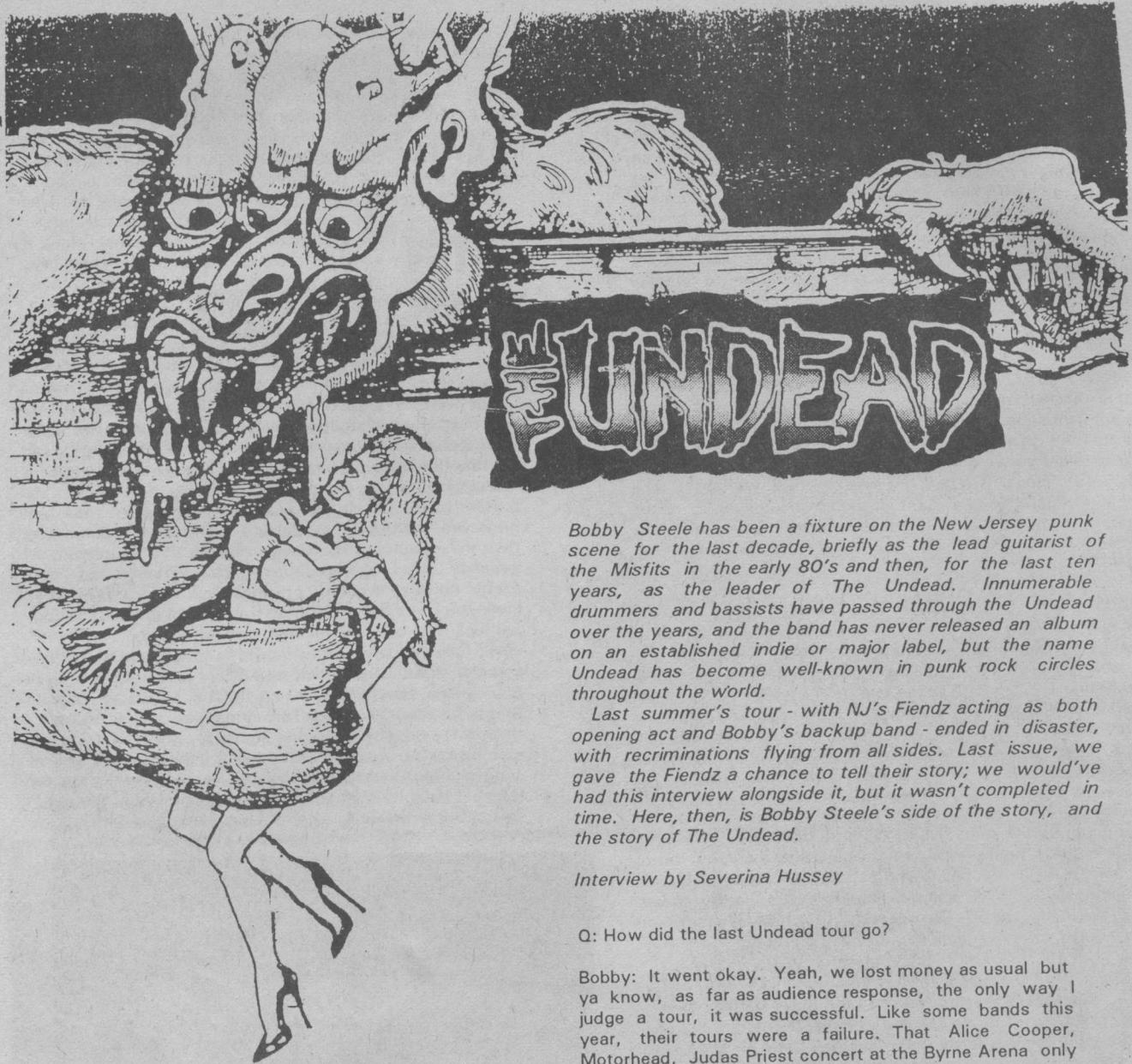


MY VINYL

By MATT SHAWKEY

the mail, I was elated! Not only had Jersey Beat actually sent me a GOOD record, he had sent me one I could fall down to in worship of its brilliance. An ingenious concept - letting 41 bands put their shorts songs on one 7" - is brilliantly executed, with an awesome selection of grindcore, hardcore, metal, and noise bands screaming their heads off at an average running time of about 12 seconds. And of course, even the bad songs are over pretty quickly, wasting precious few seconds of your lifespan. Infest by far have the most brilliant song, perhaps the only 10 second punk anthem to ever reach vinyl, followed by a Born Against song wherein the singer sounds about 10 years old and GO!s one-second "Pizza Boy." The best song title award has to go to Napalm Breath for their "Go Back To Seattle, And Get A Haircut," though by the time the song comes around, I'm lost and can no longer match what's being played to the list of song titles. Anal Cunt have six songs and 7 Minutes Of Nausea have ten of absolutely irredeemable garbage. Overall, it's brilliant. (Slap-A-Ham, PO Box 843, San Francisco, CA 94101)





Bobby Steele has been a fixture on the New Jersey punk scene for the last decade, briefly as the lead guitarist of the Misfits in the early 80's and then, for the last ten years, as the leader of The Undead. Innumerable drummers and bassists have passed through the Undead over the years, and the band has never released an album on an established indie or major label, but the name Undead has become well-known in punk rock circles throughout the world.

Last summer's tour - with NJ's Fiendz acting as both opening act and Bobby's backup band - ended in disaster, with recriminations flying from all sides. Last issue, we gave the Fiendz a chance to tell their story; we would've had this interview alongside it, but it wasn't completed in time. Here, then, is Bobby Steele's side of the story, and the story of The Undead.

Interview by Severina Hussey

Q: How did the last Undead tour go?

Bobby: It went okay. Yeah, we lost money as usual but ya know, as far as audience response, the only way I judge a tour, it was successful. Like some bands this year, their tours were a failure. That Alice Cooper, Motorhead, Judas Priest concert at the Byrne Arena only sold 7000 tickets.

Q: Even the Lollapalooza Tour didn't do well.

B: That was the most successful tour of the year, so you know by those standards, we defy!

Q: What happened with The Fiendz, why aren't they performing with you now?

B: Okay, we made an agreement not to discuss this publicly but The Fiendz have been going public [See Jersey Beat #44 - Ed.] If you want, I can play a tape of the message they left on my answering machine. They were threatening me with physical violence.

Q: The story going around is that you stranded them in Texas, alone, no money, no nothing.

B: Well, basically I did because they set themselves up for it. They'd begun extorting money out of me. The tour was losing money and they had already broken all their side of the agreements. The Fiendz have this idea that agreements only have to be kept by the other party, that they don't have to keep any agreements. Okay, I mean this happened to them with their first album. The guy was supposed to put that out but they didn't want to keep the agreement with him. And I figured it was that guy because I trusted the Fiendz and then we made agreements on this tour. I'd give them \$10 a day for food, which is more than a lot of well-established bands on tour get. They in turn would stay at peoples' houses, free housing. Only if they couldn't get a place was I going to get them a hotel. They suddenly decided in Kansas that they demanded a hotel room. While they were in the hotel room, they decided they wanted to get pay movies & I just didn't have that kind of money. They just kept making more and more demands and didn't want to keep their side of the deal. I was out of money. I was already \$800 in the red. I just left them and said, look, ya know I've done it many times, I've had to call home for money, it's time for you to call home. I'm not going to pay for everything for this! We got home and I spoke to Jerry (of the Fiendz) and he agreed not to talk about it publicly.

Photo by Andy Peters



Q: Why have you had so much trouble keeping a lineup together?

Bobby: Because I don't deal with shmucks! No, I expect certain things outta other people. I don't expect any more of others than I expect of myself. I expect people to treat this as a career, treat this as any other business they'd be in. And everybody that I ever brought into this band, I said, "Okay, forget the fact that I've been working at this band for ten years and I've never made a penny. You come in, you work equally hard as me and when things break, you'll make as much as me." And everybody agrees in the beginning, but then all of a sudden they want more and more. Like Tim (former bassist), in the end he wanted more than I was getting. Tim decided when we practiced, where we played, who was the opening band, where we recorded, which songs we recorded, and he wanted more say than that. It was okay that he was already becoming leader of the band, he just wanted more than that! I was like, how much more do I have to give up? So now what I'm doing is going out and buying Midi gear and I'm just gonna go out and program everything on the machines and tour solo.

Q: Kind of like The Bobby Steele Solo Tour?

B: Yeah, I don't like to look at it that way & I never wanted it to happen this way. But it's like, I wanted to get out and play for fans and I want musicians that are going to treat the fans with respect. I'm sick of people coming into the band and treating fans like fucking shit.

Q: So what are you doing for a new lp?

B: I've written about 20 new songs so far and I'm trying to just get out on the road so I can make some money so I can get in the studio and start working on the next album. I've got a lot of really cool shit written for it, I want to get it out as quickly as possible.

Q: Are you going to play all the instruments on it yourself?

B: Well, I'm not going to play the drums but I'll be playing guitar and bass.

Q: How old are you now?

B: Thirty-five.

Q: How've you kept going this long, haven't you ever wanted to give up? After all, it's been such a long time.

B: Nah! It's too much fun. I'm having too much of a good time.

Q: I understand that you never wanted to give the members of the Undead anything, that you always kept all the money.

B: I'll give a million dollars to anybody who can show that I've made more money out of this than anybody else in the band, okay? Cos the fact is the only money I've made is running the record company [Post-Mortem Records]. I was getting \$10 a day for food allowance, and that's when I was selling a lot of records. I haven't seen any money out of this whole thing for myself. Everybody else that was in the band has a full-time job; for example, Tim was making about \$600 a week. I'm getting \$400 a month Social Security money, so why is he bitching about money? I keep books, Tim saw the books, he knew what was going on....

Q: Were you ever approached by record companies to be signed?

B: I've been approached but never by a record company that was willing to do more than I'm doing. I know Tim was going around telling people that I turned down some major label deal & stuff like that 'cos I didn't want to give up my Social Security. The fact is, we never got offered a major label deal. In fact, Tim wouldn't even tell me who the label was so I could pursue the rumors... But I was able to sell 16,000 copies of "Act Your Rage," none of the labels wanted to give me a \$1000 advance, so what's the talk, ya know? I still got an offer to Tim, if you tell me what label it was that I turned down such a big offer from, I'll prove you're full of shit. Put it this way, we sell 16,000 copies, most of the labels turned us down, told us the record sucked, yet they're proud when their artists sell 3,000 copies.

Q: Why do you think the Misfits have remained so popular for so long?

B: I don't know? Ha ha!

Q: I mean, their lyrical content and talent wasn't anything spectacular.

Bobby's Reply

The following statement is in rebuttal to comments made by Jerry Jones of the Fiendz in our last issue:

Jim,

I had written this great rebuttal to the interview with the fiendz, but it got wiped from my computer somehow.

What is basically said was that Jerry is an ingrateful scumbag who has allowed me to spread the name of what would've been an otherwise unknown band, and then dissed me. He's tried numerous methods of extorting money out of money. Money that doesn't exist.

Anybody who knows me knows that I'm not like the person he describes in his statements. I'm usually the first person to step forward whenever someone's in trouble and offer help. I don't talk about the things that I do for people 'cause I'm not the typical "liberal showoff" who has to prove that he cares. I do it without reward.

I'm not denying that I left [the Fiendz] in Dallas... I did. I got fed up with their prima donna attitudes. We were out of money, but they wanted more. Jerry was giving me the silent treatment, just because I had wanted him to live up to his part of the agreement. They had their own van so it wasn't like they were stranded. They got home okay.

Actually the only person who's stopped associating with me over this is Mike Young of Forefront Records. He called me right after I got home and said that the fiendz were afraid I'd start slagging them. I guess; once they were assured that I wasn't gonna say anything about the matter - they had carte blanche on slagging me.

Mike, I hope you're reading this. You were duped! Jerry hates your guts. Why do you think the fiendz started playing Studio One again? Because you told Jerry that if a band ever wanted "out" of Forefront, all they had to do was play there. He wanted you to drop his band. We had a great working relationship up until this point. I've got a new label now, and the new lp has over 6,000 copies sold in advance (double Act Your Rage's advance order). I just hope the fiendz don't pull what they pulled on Neon Records with you.

This has affected me. It has caused me a lot of undue stress and has slandered my good name. Because of this, I'll never help anyone again. So if you have a band and wanted my help -- you'll know who to blame.

As for Joe & Jimmy [of the Fiendz], I didn't see any comments from you two, so everything I'm saying is aimed at Jerry. You guys provided an excellent backup during these shows, as can be heard on the new live lp. If you want copies, let me know, I'll be glad to send 'em.

As for Jerry; you're a spiteful, opportunist creep, who doesn't appreciate anything that anyone does for you. You'll kiss anyone's ass as long as you're getting what you want out of it. You'll probably go far. Just be sure to wipe the shit off your face before you go on stage... If I hear one more thing about this out of your mouth, I'll bring that tape of you threatening to extort money out of me to the FBI. I DON'T NEED THIS BULLSHIT!

This won't stop me. Three Ritz bouncers couldn't kill me. A New York subway train couldn't kill me. Shit... nothing can stop me. Except maybe a bullet between the eyes.

- Bobby Steele

B: It was just like a really fun band with energy, we clicked, ya know? You can never really put your finger on what it is that gets people. They like it, I liked the band, that's why I joined. I didn't join 'em 'cos I hated them. I thought, hey, this is going to be the next big thing.

Q: Well, now they are, now that they're gone.

B: That's how the music industry works.

Q: So exactly how long were you in the Misfits?

B: Just about two years.

Q: Now there's this big fuss about Sloppy Seconds, how they flew you to do "Eagles Dare" and everything. What was all that about?

B: That was after Tim & Eddy (former Undead drummer) walked out on me a week before our tour last year because of the "major label deal." There was no way I could cancel the shows, so the drummer from Sloppy Seconds and a friend of his that played bass offered to fill in. We had three days to practice before the first gig. In return, I did this record with them.

Q: So now everybody's making a big deal, like "We got Bobby Steel of the Misfits to play on our record." Do you feel it's a big deal?

B: Well, I don't. I'm Bobby Steele, so I see me every day. I know people that don't really know me too well; it's a big deal [to them], I guess. It was like if I were to meet Jimi Hendrix. Once you've known a person regularly, it's like you know me, I'm just another shmuck to you. As far as someone who knows you from your records only, it's a big deal.

Q: What do you think about what Glenn Danzig, and Mo & Doyle from the Misfits are doing nowadays?

B: I think what Glenn is doing is great. I think what Mo is doing is totally stupid. The fact that he came out in Jersey Beat last year and made all those comments about me and Glenn, this guy's got a serious case of foot-in-mouth disease. For one thing, he says me and Glenn are totally riding on the Misfits thing, and that he's above all that, he could never ride on the Misfits. Meanwhile, you should be an Undead or Danzig record that says "features ex-Misfits." I've seen the Kryst The Conqueror records everywhere with big stickers that say "features X-Misfits Jerry" and all this kind of stuff. So he put his foot in his

mouth there. Then he also said that every major label in the world was on the verge of signing him until the Danzig LP flopped. The Danzig album sold over a quarter million copies, man. I wish we could all flop that way. I mean, Jerry is just, like, if you ever watch on the news when they've arrested some Mafia guy like that and he tries to cut down the people that arrested him to discredit them, that's the way Jerry talks, like he's some kinda mobster been caught in the act. He can't substantiate anything he says.

Q: So basically he's the one who's riding on the Misfits?

B: Well, I'm not gonna deny riding on the Misfits. Why not? I deserve it. I never got any money out of it... I would be willing to work with Glenn at this point, if he just came to me and said "Bobby, I'm sorry," that's where I'd leave it at. But as far as Jerry goes, he's been taking Glenn to court for everything he possibly can.

Q: So what do you think of the punk scene now -- dead or alive?

B: It's starting to pick up. I've been hearing about and seeing some cool bands, we've got the Blanks out here, I haven't seen them but I've heard good stuff about them. Out in NYC I've seen a few really good bands - Devil Dogs, New Rose, the Casualties, Public Nuisance. There's more really good punk bands, not like that generic hardcore shit. I think it's about time.

Q: What about this new lawyer you have,

B: Right now, she's just helping me negotiate this live album deal and she'd kind of believe we can get a major label deal out in Europe a lot easier than here. I agree because American record companies are stupid.

Q: So what are your plans or goals for the Undead?

B: Earn money sometime.

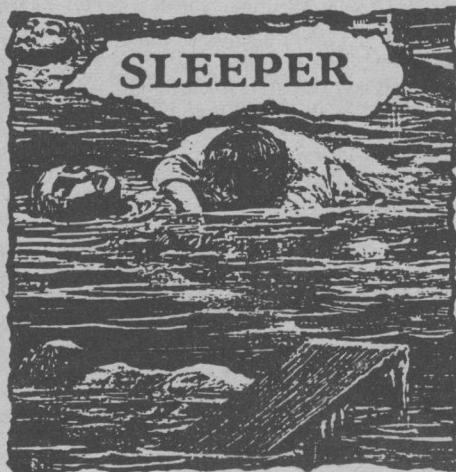
Q: If you could open for one major act in the world, who would it be?

B: Wow! Right off the top of my head, I'd say the Ramones. I mean, they've been around longer than anybody.

Q: Do you feel Undead fans have given up on you and the band?

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UNDEAD

B: No, I still get mail from the fans, they're real supportive. With this whole idea of going midi, like 90% of the fans are like, if that's what you gotta do for us to see you, then great. I'm sick of only doing 15 gigs a year. That's because when I get a band together and start booking dates, then no one wants to go on tour. So now this way I can tour and do 100 shows a year.

Q: It's hard for a lot of them, they have full-time jobs and you don't.

B: Yeah, it's kinda hard. But you get these people who get a two-week vacation and want to go to Bermuda or Hawaii instead of touring. Everything I do, I live & breathe the band. If you're not gonna live & breathe the music, then you're not going to succeed. It's like any other career, you can't put it aside. If you have something more important, then don't waste my time.

Q: Why do you think the Undead has never achieved the popularity of Danzig, the Misfits, or Samhain?

B: That's easy! They slandered me, the same thing the Fiendz are pulling now. They find an easy mark, a guy who has no money, no way to defend himself to sue you when you blackmail him and run him into the ground. That's what happened with the Misfits. They went around and told promoters, if you book the Undead, you'll never get us back... I'm sure you've seen the negative press they gave me. People believe it. They believe something without reading between the lines or looking into it. Even though Glenn and Jerry were giving contradictory stories about everything, people believed it and promoters wouldn't book the Undead. Even today, a lot of record companies won't talk to me. It's all because those guys spread stories about me. I'm like one really sincere guy. I don't bullshit people, I don't fuck with people, I don't rip people off. I do my best to always give people, their money's worth when they book a show. And it seems like everybody I try to help fucks me over. But I keep going, because it seems there's enough people out there that can see the truth....

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

B: Yeah, just don't believe all the stories. I could make accusations right now and say, "Oh Severina was here at my house and she stole everything!" And there's people who would believe it and hate you for it. You just have to learn that it's easy to accuse people, and it's hard to fight your way out of those accusations. If you believe those rumors, just think if people did it to you, how would you feel? It's not fun!

You can write to Bobby Steele for a catalog of Undead records and other merchandise, and he invites correspondence from all fans.

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Bitches and ho's, pimps and huslahs, yeah fuck all that, Jersey Beat goin' hip hop. My favorite flavor of the day is ragamuffin. Love that dance hall, love that hip hop, so why come no one can ever come correct with a perfect hybrid? (A question I often ask myself.) Anyways, that's been bothering me but only up until I got Pure Poverty, lp no. 2 from Trenton's own POOR RIGHTEOUS TEACHERS. Every sucker got at least one track left on their record for it, few can even get it half-way straight. Not the case with PRT. Backed by production wiz Tony D., Poor Righteous Teachers hit hard with their first single, "Shakiyla (JRH)," which is featured as track one on their debut album. Listen, it just gets better & better. True to form, knowledge of self, crossover hip hop on the real life tip. My vote for the most original-sounding rap record of 1991, with SON OF BAZERK'S debut holding a close 1 1/2.

Bazerk and his crew, No Self Control & The Band, deliver many different styles on Bazerk Bazerk Bazerk, including but not at all limited to jazz, reggae, hardcore, punk rock, all coming together like a lounge act from the Brick. Strong Island New York! '91 sure was the year fro New York rappers to come correct and finally overshadow those L.A. gangsters we've all come to know and get annoyed with. Son Of Bazerk is the leader of the pack as we approach 2000 A.D. "What's the future of rap?" ask the Bomb Squad. They seem to know what with SOB, YBT, and lest we forget Public Enemy under their belts, they seem to know...

So why they wanna stray, what with Milli Vanilla (thanx Liles) KID PANIC polluting the Soul Records camp? Dollar signs are fine, and I'd exploit the shit outta this punk too (only under a pseudonym). My guess is the Bomb Squad saw all the bank they lost when they didn't touch Vanilla Ice back in the day, so they right up there for round two. Housey, dancey beats, over-contrived "positive" raps that barely flow. I hear he's proud of the fact that Shocklee dubbed the motherfucker rap's answer to James Dean, but I think we was referring to the fact that Dean was a flaming homosexual in real life. No props...

If smoking dope and hating cops is your thing, then check out the West Coast's best rappers, CYPRESS HILL. DJ P best described them in The Source as "Ice Cube meets Brand Nubian." Hardcore attitude with a capital ATTITUDE, coming thru smooth on the nutty-psycho tip, not unlike Leaders of The New School at times. Lotsa fat gangsta lean beats under rapidfire vocals make these hyper-phunkey, buddha-puffin brother SoCals shining light, what with all the Compton wannabes (and even somma the veterans) running outta beats and things to say. Their self-titled debut on Ruffhouse/Columbia is essential.

Heading south, we got Dallas' own MC 900 FT. JESUS, the rhymers most y'all hip hoppers slept on when "To Hell With The Lid Off" came out. Probably cuz the only ones to give the man props were brave college radio programmers and, ugh, 120 Minutes. Brother's back with a vengeance now though on his 2nd lp for Nettwerk, Welcome To My Dream. This time he's in with a full backing band, along with some of the dopest breaks and scratches you ever heard, ala DJ Zero. This record starts out on sort of a spacey-blues tip on "Falling Elevators" and cuts right to a go-go, strictly hip hop flavor. To put it quite simply, there's nothing simple about this record. Deep and certainly interesting, he's got his own thang and y'all can't diss that shit.

Now whenever somebody asks me about the new rap to check out, I always tell 'em "Peep anything on Basic." HOLLYWOOD BASIC, that is. Head shit FUNKENLEIN seems to be the 90's hip hop hipster. He keeps finding the groups that refuse to settle for one style or contrived beats. Just check out the debuts from RAW FUSION and ORGANIZED KONFUSION, both way up there on the



ON The hip HoP TiP By Mattatude UnjusTuh

Mattatude personal playlist. Organized Konfusion first took the scene by storm with their "Who Stole My Last Piece Of Chicken"/"The Rough Side Of Town" 12", showcasing three of their extremes - humor, hardcore, and laid back ragamuffin. We all knew that was just a samplin;, but man, gimme pages and pages and I'll describe the lp. For now I'll just say dope. Much props.

Speaking of basic camp dope, RAW FUSION droppin' much bombs on Live From The Styletron. DIGITAL UNDERGROUND's Money B and DJ Fuse take the D.U. funk thing one step further. Not as commercial but still holdin popular tendencies. Just enough to muster up a decent amount of airplay for their first single, "Throw Your Hands In The Air." Yeah, Hollywood Basic is definitely the label to watch, almost as exciting as Def Jam was back in the day...

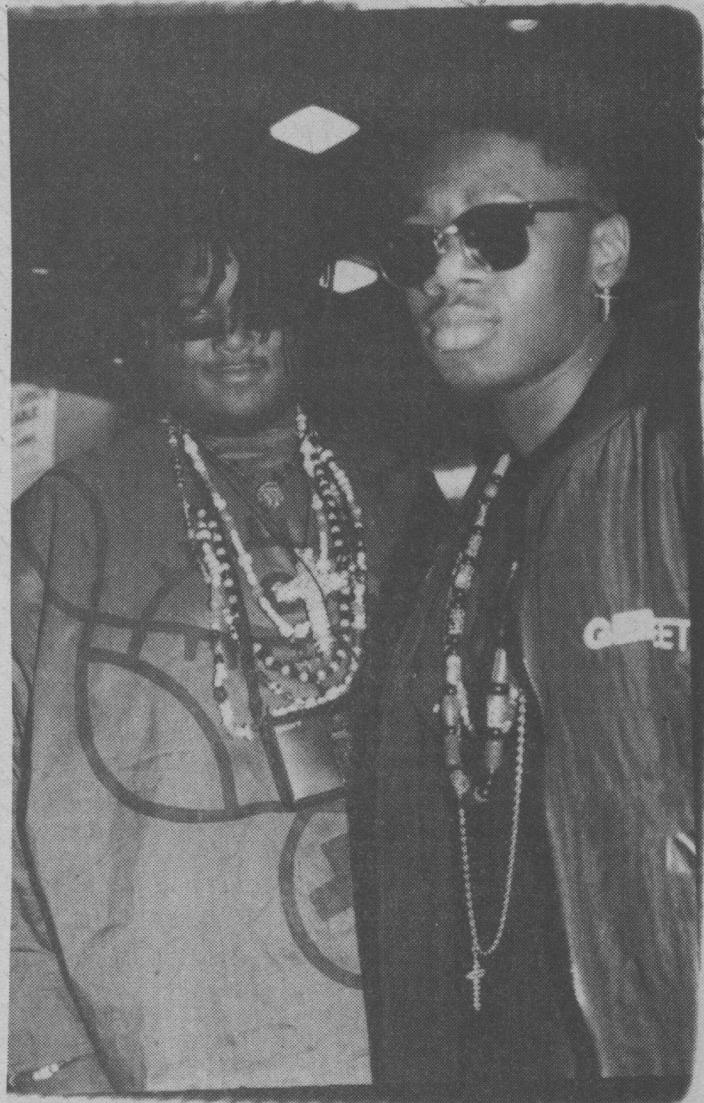
And speaking of Def Jam, make way for the prophets of rage, PUBLIC ENEMY, back in full effect, fresh for '91, '92, forever! The long awaited Apocalypse '91...The Enemy Strikes Back does everything but disappoint. Classic PE hardcore knowledge, intricate lyrical styling, insanely hype production, 100% message oriented. Finally, someone steps forth with enough nuts to say "I Don't Wanna Be Called Yo Niga" and enough guts to tell the huge corporation that wants to make too much money off the community, "Fuck off till you shell out for motherfuckers who made ya punk asses" on "Shut Em Down." Ain't no brothers out there kickin the truth like PE. They break every cliche ever inflicted on the black race and throw it straight up out the window, so why y'all ain't listening? I don't mean listening, I mean LISTENING!

In 52 minutes and 2 seconds, they proceed to drop bombs on lazy wannabes, dope pushers, Uncle Toms, our fucked up system of American apartheid, modern day slavery known as the work force, wack radio too scared to give real rappers props, Arizona's refusal to recognize the MLK holiday, brothers selling out the hood, where the money really goes in the music biz, the malt liquor industry, the media, big business, the New York Post, the police...come on now. Who could touch that?

A new Def Jam find is NICE AND SMOOTH, first heard by most of us on 3rd Bass' "Microphone Techniques." But little did we know this is album #2 for these New York brothers. They out with major distro and videos, the whole nine on Ain't A Damn Thing Changed. Old school style rhymin', harmless lyrics, keepin the day to day lifestyle flowing, crazy ass dancing.... Man, this is just goofy, almost nerdy at times. Love it. They even sample the theme to "Sanford & Son." Too much!

Causin much damage over across the Atlantic, on the continent and across the Channel, we got HIJAK, down with the SYNDICATE and fresh off the Ice T, Donald D, Lord Finesse tour all thru Europa. After three singles and the European drop of their lp The Horns Of Jericho, Hijack is the closest the UK has come to dropping a hip hop phenom. So where's the props stateside? I don't know. These brothers deliver a lot of serious shit, straight up message rhymes concerning the state of world culture both lyrically and symbolically. Hunt it down and pay the few extra bucks for the import, maybe that'll encourage a domestic release.

Not a whole helluva lot of new ground broken on Skanless, the debut from Compton's HI-C FEATURING TONY A. Generally, when I see a press release blurring the fact that the artist is from "the mean streets of Compton," I can deduce that the release will sell really



well and that it's typical of what usually sells really well - crap. So ok, Hi-C isn't exactly crap. In fact, Skanless is an enjoyable listen, with songs about everyday thangs like sex, smokin hoochie, jheri curls, all on the humor tip, something that sure ain't typical of the Comptonites. Yeah, this ain't bad.

While TIM DOG may think he's doing damage with a sophomoric effort like "Fuck Compton," the BLACK SHEEP drop much knowledge on their slammin hardcore parody, "U Mean I'm Not," track two on A Wolf In Sheep's Clothing. That shit cracks me up and drops a bomb the siza the Carlinaz on all the 15-year old meanies tryin ta run thangs. Lines like "Went to the bathroom and beat the rush/Yo! who the fuck used my toothbrush?" thrown in a total rage. Then he beats his sister and goes down to eat with folks. "Ma! You broke the fuckin' egg yolk!" Kills his parents, the whole nine, all before catchin the school bus. Then the whole diatribe turns out to be a dream that he was "hard." Man, crazy shit like that makes life worth living.

P.M. DAWN, P.M. DAWN, man, what can I say? Rap just keeps expanding and expanding. Add another sort of sub-group to the hip hop nation, but oh how to name it? P.M. Dawn comes off on their debut lp with spacey, soulful production, smoothed out lyrics here, hyper lyrics there, and a way wacky style (almost too much style for some, I'm afraid.) "Set Adrift On Memory Bliss," the first single, was hot, but check out the jumpier "Reality Used To Be A Friend Of Mine" for a better view of the album. They keep the laid-backness on all the tracks, but "Set Adrift" isn't exactly a great sampling. They can kinda rock when they want to. In their own way, of course.

Can't end this without speaking on some new acts I got to catch recently. Up in Erie, PA, I got to hear the debut singles from INTELLIGENT BLACK MINDS and PRO BLACK POSSE. Both check in with heavy knowledge smashing the state of their hometown to pieces, with "Playground" from the IBM and "Erie The Crackland" by PBP. If you're in the Erie area, check out 88.5 FM WMCE on Sunday nights from 8 to 10 pm.

Noticed a couple brothers kickin it at a new club called the Tower up in E-Town. KING RALPH kicks tracks with a live band and is smooth as can be. The kid can flow faster than any new jack I seen in a while. LORD T is one of the fellas runnin The Tower and he's a pretty straightforward rapper, bordering on hardcore but more of kinda just a nice guy. Get in touch with the Erie crew thru DMT Productions, 318 Reed St, Erie PA 16507. Any rappers lookin to perform at The Tower should check in with them too.

DECADENT DUB TEAM at last check were still looking for a dj. Seem J-Son took off to join Wax Trax' own Skatenigs. Sheesh. Anyhow look for their "Money"/"Gold" 12" and "Meltdown" 7", both on Triple X. DDT is bumin. Expect a move to NYC soon.

Anyways, that's it for now. I'm Mattatude, and yes, I'll take your demos, yes I want your letters, and yes, I want free stuff from labels. So get in gear. Send info on local rappers too. I'm out. Get in touch.

P.M. DAWN

Photo by Michele Taylor

ON
THE
HIP
HOP
TIP

OUR AMERICAN cousins

by Jim Testa

Our American Cousins gets the nod as one of my favorite local bands of 1991, with a bright and engaging sound that combines fluid and swirling guitar leads with energetic, almost gushing vocals -- sort of Buzzcocks Meet Superchunk. They've just released their third single, the first on Rockville Records and the second since singer John King joined the band. John, original members J.R. and Monica Castronovo (lead guitar and bass) and drummer Rick Melara sat down to chat before a show at Space At Chase in Manhattan in early December.

Q: Why don't we start with the earliest history of the band -- that would be Monica and J.R.'s story.

Monica: We used to be in a band in Connecticut called Dot Dash. Our old singer, Mike Patterson, was drumming for us, and another guy, Mike Lieberman, was on vocals. So there was this big Yoko Ono breakup because our old singer's girlfriend...

J.R.: Hey, stop! This is gonna be in the magazine and Mike's gonna read it...

Monica: Oh yeah. Well, anyway, it was this big thing and so Mike Lieberman left, and being that Mike Patterson had such a good voice, we had him move to vocals. Then we put out an ad for drummers, and Rick was the only one who answered. He had only been playing for 6 months, and he was perfect. Then with Mike Patterson [leaving], it was just a mutual falling out. His style wasn't really suitable for what we wanted to do, and he wanted to go for a more...

J.R.: Mike is a great guy, and he's very soulful, but he's got a very Duran Duran...

Monica: Simon LeBon. That's his hero. He sings just like Simon LeBon.

J.R.: He had his roots and we had our roots. We're still friends with Mike. He's in another band now, Johnny Skillssaw, who are very good.



Power Pop
On The
Razor's Edge
of Sanity

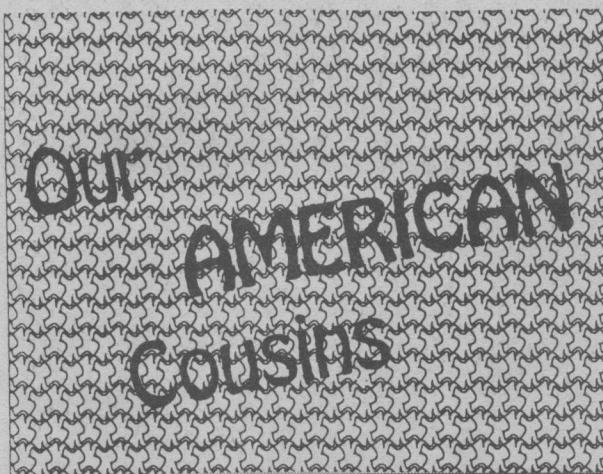
Monica: So we auditioned singers, and we put an ad in the Village Voice, which was a BIG mistake, and we put the word "punk" in the ad, which was an even bigger mistake. So we had every walking nightmare from God knows where come in to audition. And then we were listening to Humidifier tapes, because we used to play with them in Connecticut, and we knew they had broken up and John was living here now, and we said, "hey, John can sing. They used to do that cover of 'Boys Of Summer.'" So he came down. And it worked out. Then he quit after two weeks.

John: After two DAYS.

Monica: After two days. He couldn't take the pressure.

John: And then I joined again.

J.R.: He called about two days later and said, I think I want to do this.



John: It's sort of a thing with this band, somebody has to quit every two weeks just to keep things fresh.

J.R.: Monica's quit, how many times? About fifteen?

Monica: I quit constantly. But I havent' quit for a long time.

J.R.: Rick is the only one who hasn't quit yet.

Rick: Although I was about to, one time.

J.R.: When?

Rick: After one of those CBGB shows that went really bad, and I just said 'Fuck it.' It was one of those shows where we were gonna slash our collective wrists. But then we played a brilliant show and I said, 'Wait, I LOVE this band!' So I didn't quit.

Q: From things John has told me when he's been drunk, I get the impression that being in this band is sort of a cross between being trapped inside a pressure cooker and being on a soap opera.

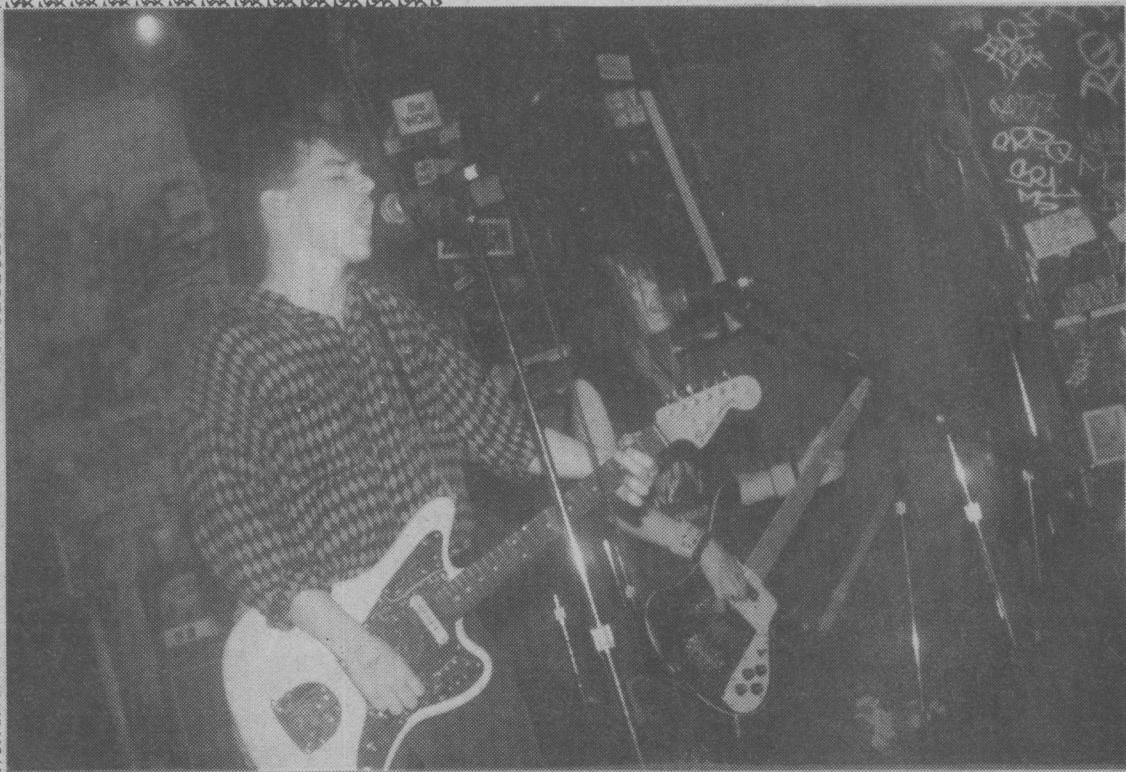
Monica: That's us. 'As The Band Turns.'

Q: Does that domestic turmoil give an edge to your art, or is it just a pain in the butt that you all have to deal with?

Monica: It was a real pain in the butt.

J.R.: A pain in the butt!!

Monica: You know the whole thing with J.R. and I being married and then getting divorced. And we got to a point where we hated being in the same room with one another.



Rick: But he got some great songs out of it.

John: Actually, when you break up with a girlfriend, I think you write about five songs. When you get a divorce, you write about twenty.

Monica: It was good that we worked through it, because I think it made us a lot stronger. If [the band] can handle having two of the members divorced... We didn't even take any time off to get over it. We just went through this divorce and still had to see each other two, three times a week at practice.

J.R.: We tried to keep it so we could remain friends...

Monica: It got really hard...

J.R.: Yeah, but as two adults, I always thought we could work it out. And we really believe in this band. To do something like that, to have a relationship and then break up and still stay in the same band, I think it really proves that we love what we're doing.

John: I really thought you two would never stop fighting.

Q: The band when Mike was singing was a totally different thing than after John joined. Not just the songs you were doing, but the direction you were going in, the way you dressed on stage... Was that change already in the works, or did you just re-tool the whole thing after John joined the band?

Monica: I think it was just a matter of growing up. Not just the music, but growing up in general. Getting better, learning to write better songs...

J.R.: We've always been in love with pop bands, with the Buzzcocks and so on. It's easy to throw the Buzzcocks name around because everyone knows them, but I think for me and John, they're the band we grew up on, that we thought was amazing. We've never patterned ourselves after one specific band. [The current sound] is something we've always wanted to do, but we couldn't do it at first because we were talentless at the time. That's one of the reasons we went to John, too, because John had this nice, young pop voice.

Monica: And besides, he's so cute.

John: And I also think that you tended to write songs to deal with Mike's voice.

Monica: A lot of early songs we wrote, we trashed, because we knew there was no way Mike could sing them, he would've just butchered it.

J.R.: Hey, he's gonna read this too!

Monica: Not intentionally butcher the songs, it's just, the way he sang wasn't compatible. His voice was just so different.

Q: Monica, do you get totally sick of being compared to [Sonic Youth's] Kim Gordon?

Monica: YES! When I first started, when I was a real hack, I used to think it was real cool, because I really admired her. I used to see Sonic Youth play small clubs in Connecticut, when a hundred people would show up, and

I would think, wow, she's so cool. But I don't intend on looking like her, and I don't really play like her. I just bop around like she does.

Q: I think any female bass player in New York, in a punk sort of band, is going to be compared to Kim.

Monica: You get compared to someone, and there are so few women who are well-known.

J.R.: At least it's not Kim Deal.

Q: So, home... J.R. and Monica live in Manhattan, right? And John lives in Jersey City...

Rick: I live here in the City too.

J.R.: We're a Manhattan band now, pretty much.

Monica: We just got sick of commuting. That's why we moved the band down from Connecticut. We were so sick of driving in two or three times a week, and having to find nine-to-five jobs to pay for it, it was just ridiculous. So we all moved into Manhattan. Except for John.

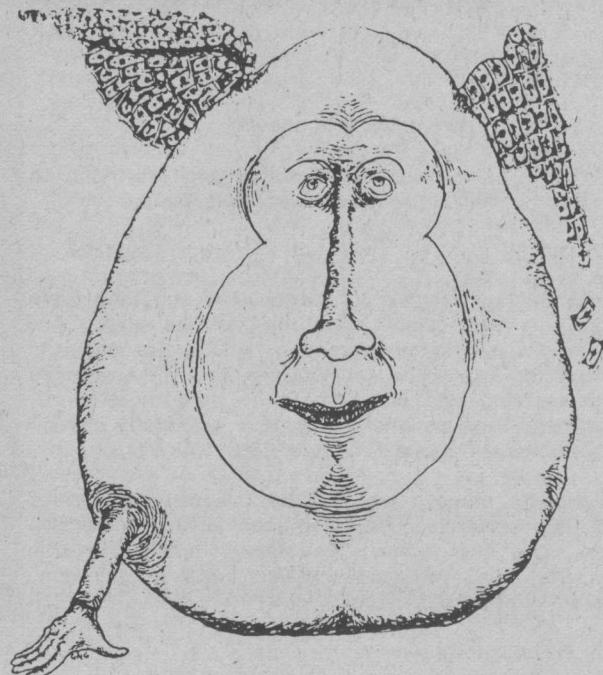
John: I'd rather pay \$300 a month than \$700 a month for the same space. I'll pay the dollar for the PATH train.

Q: We've already done the story of why you left Hoboken.

John: Yeah, Jim has this great technique of only interviewing me when I'm totally wasted. Actually, the only time he ever sees me is when I'm totally wasted, because it's always at Maxwells and I'm always completely drunk by the time he gets there. And I just say ridiculous things, and then I open the paper and it says, 'John King said...'

Q: And he never remembers any of it, either.

Monica: He also doesn't remember the songs sometimes.



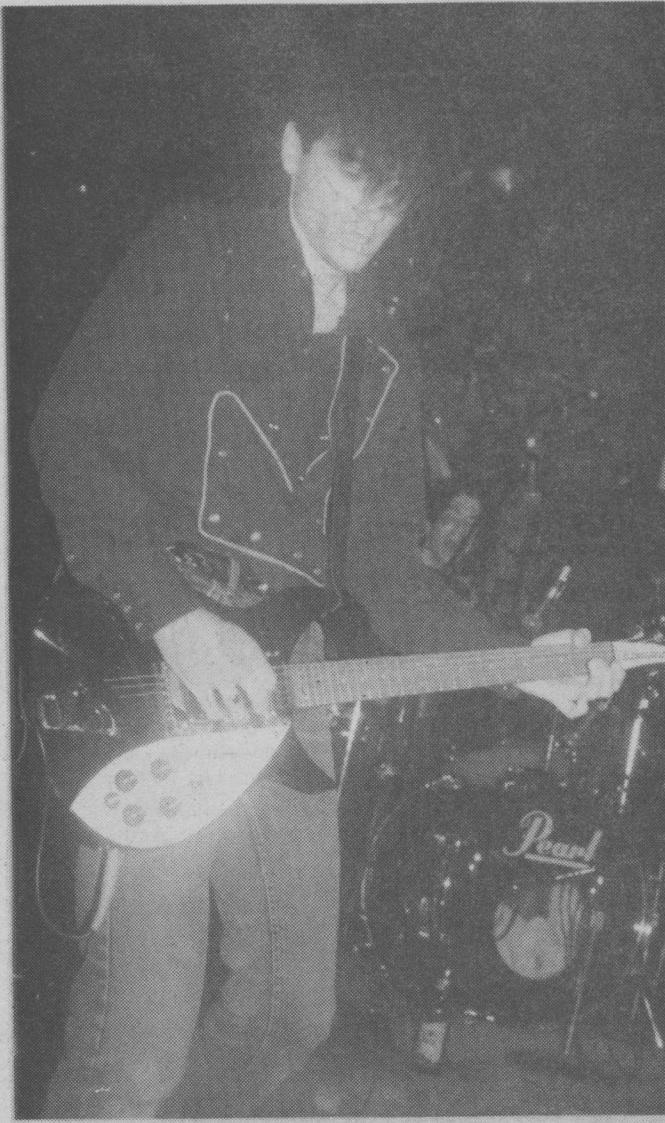


Photo by Jim Testa

J.R.: Yeah, no more drinking at shows!

Q: What is it like, being a band in your position, trying to get signed and so forth, here in New York?

All: It sucks!

Monica: We're doing a lot better than we ever have before. I'm really excited about the Rockville single. And they're giving it good promotion. And we're going to England for a tour, the last two weeks of February. So things are happening. But it's hard. It's hard to get press. A lot of the business is who you know, and we're not the kind of people who make the right sort of friends...

J.R.: None of us have ever been backslappers. We have a hard time socializing and being part of the downtown scene. I've been in bands for ten years and... It's true what they say, you get into bands because you don't have any friends, but...

John: We still don't have any friends.

J.R.: We don't pal around with the kind of people who could get us shows or get us to open for them at the Ritz or whatever. But that's fine by us, we still like what we're doing.

Q: But it looks like you do have a following. There were people at that last show at CBGB who were there to see you.

John: They don't all come at one time though. There's three at one show and three at another show.

Monica: We do have a following, but the thing about being in New York is that you can only play so many times before people start saying, 'oh, I'll see them next week if I don't see them this week.' And then they don't come at all. When we play out of state, we get a really great response. In Boston or Pennsylvania or Connecticut, we do really, really well. It's really hard being a band in this city.

Monica: Ask us about our day jobs.

Q (to John): Are you still a waiter?

John: No, I work with Monica and Rick now.

Monica: We water plants for a living. We got to office buildings and water plants.

Rick: I've been doing it for a year and a half, and I just got these two jobs.

Q: (to John): And you have what kind of degree?

John: Uh, (red-faced) a B.A. in Communication.

J.R.: Ask Rick something. He's really funny.

Q: Okay, Rick. I understand you learned how to play drums, practiced a few months, and then joined this band?

Rick: Yeah, I finished college and decided I needed something, so I learned the drums. Then I moved down to the city from Upstate New York specifically for that purpose, to join a band. And I found a flyer from these guys, and that's it.

Q: What happened, you had a post-puberty crisis in your life?

Rick: Yeah, as soon as I graduated from college, I knew I could never be a businessman. So I kind of freaked out and bought a drum kit.

John: I'd be on a farm in Georgia right now working with El Salvadorean refugees if it wasn't for this band. I was accepted and everything.

Monica: John probably would've won the Nobel Peace Prize in twenty years if it wasn't for this band.

J.R.: I really don't know what keeps people in a band. It's so frustrating.

Rick: Fear.

All: Fear?

Rick: Fear of what else is out there.

by Rodney Leighton

Pugwash, Nova Scotia -- Up here in what one chap recently referred to as "the asshole of the world," we got our first snowstorm of the season last night. Looks like about four inches, which is four inches more than I'd like to see. It seems as if our damn money-hungry, damn-the-people Postal system lost some of our tapes. Sigh.

ATMO (CP 409, 95100 Catania Italy) Hmm, these guys from Italy do a mostly instrumental, psychedelic pop. Seems to be mostly about nature and the environment. Pretty good, I would have preferred the CD though. God, what a thing to say in a cassette column!

BARE BONES - Life Sentence (953 Melrose Ave, Montreal Qbc CANADA H4A 2R3) A full-size release from this fe/male duo who have their feet firmly planted in the world of folk rock and their hands and tongues in the world of rhythm and blues. Pretty good overall.

THE BLACK RAIN (185 3rd St #4C, NYC 10009) A demo of death metal. That's all I have to say.



UNCOMMON SOCIETY

Photo by Jim Testa



GRIEVOUS ANGELS - 4X3 (28 Oxford Rd, Englishtown NJ 07726) Three guys doing four pop tunes. Quite well done, with an obvious 60's influence, but nothing that really grabbed my attention.

EDGAR SCHWARTZ (1064 W 134 Pl, Gardena CA 90247) The ultimate in homemade music. A couple of guys took some dated equipment, did their singing and playing and put it all on tape. It turned out great. The bouncy pop sounds are balm to the ears; the near-garage-like lyrics will make you sit up and pay attention. Nearly all satire or parodies, this is fun, relaxing, thoughtful...hell, write for a copy!

GLUE GUN - A Sticky Compilation This is the perfect demo. Three songs which make you wish for more; I wish they'd put out a full length tape or, better yet, a CD. And I'd love to see or better yet, meet their lead singer, with the intriguing name of Noli. A very punk band, but a great punk band. If I ever get to NJ, I'm going to bedevil Jim until he takes me to see them perform.

GRIP WEEDS (Box 1721, New Brunswick NJ 08903) A band with expectations of commercial success. Considerable Doors influence. Headed for AM airplay?

LAZARUS EFFECT (c/o Nelson Pla, 42 Grant Ave, Cliffside Pk, NJ 07010) A one-man force to be reckoned with in the gothic/death/thrash/industrial spectrum. Some diversity on this sampler. One is compelled to feel sorry for the guy and his world, and then to feel sorry for the world in general. Not really my bag but well done for the genre.

JAKE RARDIN'S HUMAN ISLAND (TVM, Box 1328, Huntington WV 25715) This is a cassette made specifically to assist the homeless in West Virginia. The liner notes contain the shocking news that there are in excess of 3500 homeless children in that state. The material is all instrumental, in a bouncy, pop, somewhat experimental way, and well worth a few listens. For \$7 you can hear a dozen or so interesting songs and help out some kids.

RICH (Arithmetic, Box 22691, Seattle WA 98122) Yippie, a cassingle! It actually has a bonus number. Same three songs on each side of the tape. I liked them, sort of hippie, humorous pop.

SABOT (c/o Pam Kray, 2702 18th St, San Francisco CA 94110) A fe/male duo doing instrumentals. Eight short songs in an experimental, "let's try this and see what happens" style.

SCOTT LIGON PANIC LIONS (605 Parl Ave #7, Baltimore MD 21201) Pretty good, easy-listening pop. Almost folk-like.

THE STAND - Another Round (Chris Page, RR2 Bainsville, Ont. Canada K0C 1E0) Basic punk rock band from the wilds of Ontario. Pretty good, really.

STRANGELOVE (PO Box 570763, Miami FL 33257) A six-tune tape from a trio of pop artists with a bit of an underground feel. Mostly love songs. Decent but it's, ah, a touch bland.

TEX WAGNER - Rumble & Squawk (202 E 21 St #4D, NYC 10010) A 4-song, double sided EP of Western music moved to the big city and gone hard. It grooves quite well while being easy to listen to.

TINDERBOX (PO Box 1060, Hoboken NJ 07030) A quartet doing basically soft rock, with tinges of pop and hard rock. Sounds pretty good, I'd like to hear more from them.

UNCOMMON SOCIETY - Laugh It Away (50 Woodbury Cres. Ottawa, Ont. Canada K1G 5C8) Bunch of Canadian punks who sound pretty good and who are really young and even respectful of their parents. Strange, in this day and age, what? Give them a try, eh?

YA-NE-ZNIYOO - Whatever Goes Where (Box 789, Fairview NJ 07022) The promo pack calls their material "spyrodelick," whatever that means. I call it experimental, rock-tinged pop. Slightly interesting.

WALK THE TALK (115 7th St, Pt Reading NJ 07064) The four tunes here range from a metal self-titled number to the almost pop "City Of Angels." Lots of promise.

WAG - Multiple Cartoon Dogs (808 Clark St #2, Evanston IL 60201) Pretty groovy, innovative pop with hints of rock. Good songs, with clear, urgent vocals and a jangly, bouncy tempo.

HOW TO LOVE THE ROTTING CADAVER #9 (PO Box 10, Woodhaven New York 11421) I think that's the title of this piece of shit. On the liner notes, it says "offbeat, bizarre, unusual poems." I guess that fits. All spoken word stuff, done in a nasal, whiney voice. Laden with dirty words and sexual references. I expect that a different delivery might have proven more listenable. I found it boring an uninteresting.



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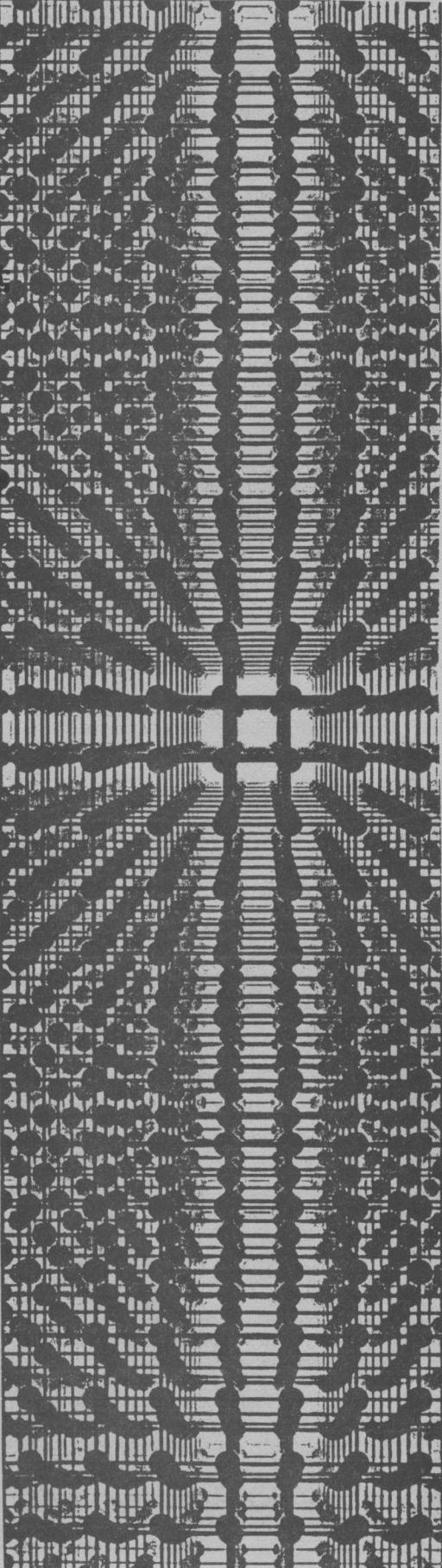
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TALKIN' SHIT WITH NIRVANA

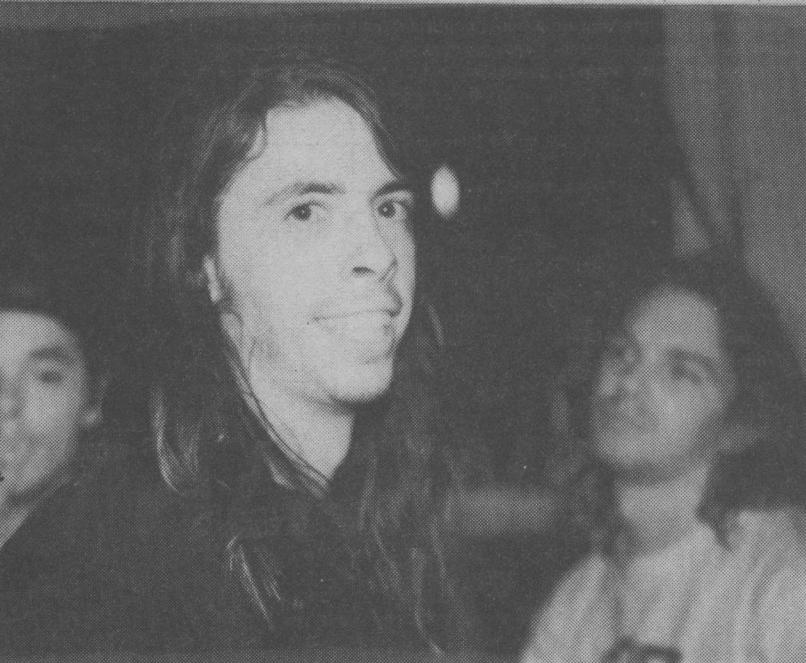
by Johnny Puke

By this point, everybody knows who Nirvana is, from their original corps of fanatical Sub-Pop devotees to the legions of heavy-metal mooks who picked up their Top 5 lp, *Nevermind*, at K-Mart last Christmas. Our man Johnny Puke caught up with the kings of grunge-rock in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and while the Nirvana boys were pretty burnt out from interviews, they did chat a while about some offbeat topics, including some stuff that doesn't smell like *Teen Spirit*.

Here we are now. Entertain us.

D: David Grohl
K: Kurt Cobain
C: Chris Novaselic
J: Johnny Puke/Jersey Beat

Photo by Johnny Puke



D: So you just came up from Nag's Head? That's cool. I was just down there with my family. It's either go there or shitty Ocean City.

J: Yeah, Ocean City is that Myrtle Beach of the North.

D: Y'know, I went to Myrtle Beach about 10 years ago and it was beautiful. It didn't seem like it was overrun with all the tourist-trap scum commercial bullshit. It seemed pretty cool and they had the biggest waves I'd ever seen from the beach. I almost got killed. I went with all these guys from my rugby team, so there's all these burly rugby players jumpin' in the waves. Me and my friend Larry, we were like 12, breakin' limbs... Have you ever been to Ocean City?

J: Yeah, once.

D: It's just a strip of McDonalds, hotels, putt putt golf and waterslides. It's a shithole.

J: So how did you get from D.C. to Seattle?

D: I was in a band called Scream and we were doing a tour of America. At the time, our bass player was getting back together with his girlfriend over the phone. We got to Los Angeles and had half of a tour left to do and he just split. So we were stuck in L.A. for like a month and a half or two months.

J: The whole band?



Photo by Michele Taylor

Here We Are Now Entertain Us

D: Yup. We just sort of sat around. The guys from Nirvana saw Scream play in San Francisco and they thought I was a good drummer. So it was decided that if they were looking for a drummer and I was available, they'd ask me to play. So I ended up calling them up, flying out there, and doing it.

J: How long were you with Scream?

D: Four years.

J: So that was after the second album?

D: Yeah.

J: I liked Scream.

D: So did I.

J: So are they back with that Skeeter guy?

D: No, he's just living in D.C. being a bike courier. Pete and Franz are still out in L.A.

J: So how long have you been in Nirvana?

D: About a year and a half.

J: You didn't have to audition or anything, you just flew out?

D: Well, it was weird. I just sort of flew up there. I'd listened to the record and I'd learned everything. It was strange. I just practiced with them once and it was like, "okay, you're in." It didn't take long. It clicked really fast too. Two weeks later, we did a tour of Europe. That was bizarre.

J: So this is the first national tour you've done with them?

D: This is the first time I've been to the East Coast with them. We've done tours with Dinosaur Jr and we've done some shows up in Canada.

J: But you weren't with them last time they came down South. When they did the teeny shows.

D: Teeny shows?

J: They played the Milestone in Charlotte, NC. It's a house that was turned into a club. Everybody plays in the living room.

D: That's what I was used to being in Scream. Small places, little shitholes. And with Nirvana, now we're starting to play bigger places and I sometimes feel really disconnected, farther removed from the audience. Especially when there's a barrier or something. In Scream, we never dealt with shit like that. When we were over in England with Nirvana about a month ago, touring with Sonic Youth, we played at the Reading Festival. There were 35,000 people there and it was a very humbling experience.

J: What about the business side of things? It seems like Scream was probably a lot more in touch with stuff concerning tours.

D: Well, you've got to think of it like, Scream was never half as big as Nirvana is now. We could deal with booking our own tour, answering our mail and stuff. Now we (Nirvana) have someone who answers all our mail for us, and the tours are booked by a big agency. I don't really like the agency too much. You know, when you're dealing with publishing companies, a major label, and getting interviews set up with like five different people a day, you have to have your shit together, and none of us could do that and play in the band at the same time. We got a manager about 8 months ago and it took such a load off our backs. Because, y'know, people would call us to do a show and we'd just forget to call them back or lose the number.

When you get to a serious level, where there's a lot of business going on, it's better to work with people who understand the business than have three naive little kids come in and try and do it. We'd just end up getting fucked. If we were to have gone into our contract with

DGC by ourselves, we would have gotten fucked. But as it was, we had a really good lawyer and now we have the final say in everything.

J: You got a pretty healthy advance as well.

D: The advance was okay. People are under the impression that when you receive an advance, it goes straight into your pocket.

J: You have to pay it back.

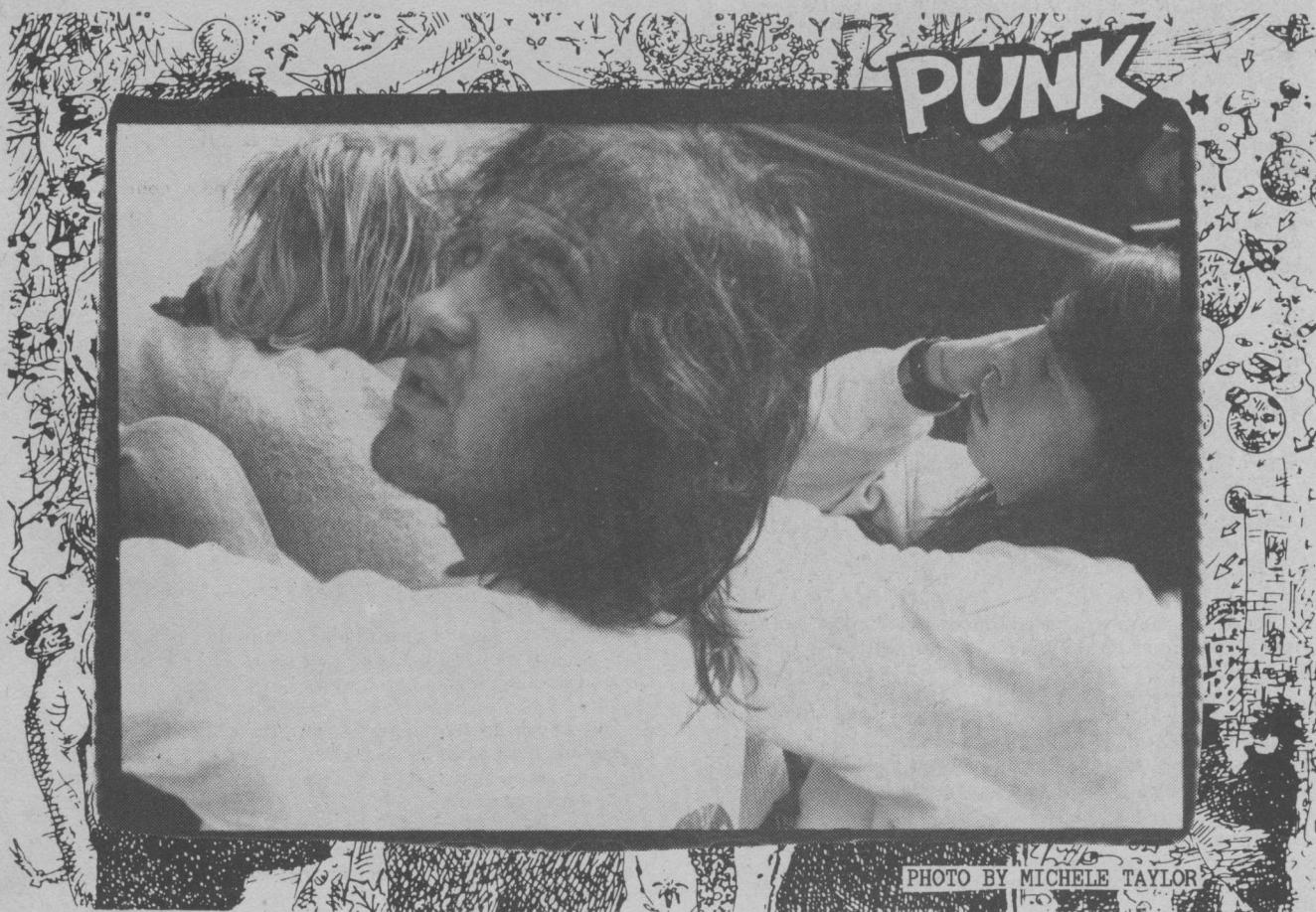
D: You don't even GET it, it's all budgeted. Budgets toward video or promotion or recording or whatever. Spending \$150,000 on a record these days is normal; \$100,000 is, like, frugal. So the amount of money we got for an advance was nothing.

J: Yeah, but for Nirvana.... How much did "Bleach" cost to record? \$1000?

D: \$600.

J: That's a huge jump in the space of one album!

D: It's true. I don't know, maybe it's just the label. We recorded the record at just under \$100,000 and we did it in 3 1/2 weeks. Everyone was just amazed at how fast and how cheap it was. To me, I'd never done anything like that before. And sure, the studio was really big, it was this great studio that hasn't been touched since 1973, and Stevie Nicks had recorded there. So did Fleetwood Mac, Pat Benatar and Cheap Trick. It was all analog, no digital, the place was a shithole. It hadn't



been maintained as well as it should have been, but it sounded great. Then we went into this big 1991 studio to mix, and everything was all automated and digital with computers and shit. But it didn't turn out so we had to mix it in another studio. I'd rather not wrack my brain on the business side of things, that's what we have a manager for. As long as we can get out and play shows, and they're all ages... This is all ages tonight, isn't it?

J: No way!

D: That's what happens when you get out of touch with everything.

J: Is all-ages shows something Nirvana strives for?

D: Yeah, on this tour we were trying to do only all-ages places across the country. When we played in Boston, we show up to this place and find it's like a party for some radio station's 10th anniversary. These two clubs were hooked up to each other and in one club there was like The Wonder Stuff and School of Fish, and all these dance bands. And then in the other club it was us and Smashing Pumpkins and Bullet Lavolta. We thought it would be all-ages, but it wasn't. So we said to the club that we were under the impression that this show was going to be for all ages, and it wasn't, so we would like to come back tomorrow and play an all ages show before you open with your disco shit. And they went for it! So we did a \$5 all-ages show on one day's notice, and 500 kids showed up.

J: The all-ages thing is interesting to me because it's not a desire that one would associate with the "rock business." I think it's more part of the Do It Yourself punk thing.

D: We don't want to be associated with any of the "rock bands." We may place some of the "rock" clubs... We don't want people to be turned off by this "rock band" image that people are trying to pin on us because we've signed to a major label. We're still the same people with the same music. Kurt's writing the same songs. The record is a lot more produced but... fuck, we don't want kids who are 16 or 17 years old not to be able to come to our shows because some bar wants to make money off selling beer or whatever. It's a shame to come to a town and see kids who can't get in because they're not old enough.

[Now we joing Kurt and Chris at a booth at the back of the club. Chris is sprawled.on in the bench seat with a foot that is obviously hurting.]

J: What happened?

C: I got really drunk last night and I was running over cars or something.

K: He tried to jump over a car and landed on his knees.

J: This was in D.C.?

D: There's a club there called Clockword Orange and all these people dress up like the movie. I thought it would be like a milk bar.

C: No, it's called Clockwork Orange night. The place is called The Opera... I want to go to those clubs in San Francisco where you take those new kind of drugs, those amino acids. They all taste like Tang and it's new.

J: A new kind of drug?

K: I've got plenty of Boric Acid and Mitic Acids you can have, Chris.

J: So what's this new drug? It's not just some strain of Ecstasy?

K: It's a Huey Lewis drug. It's supposedly herbal, it has like ginseng and all these other herbs in it and supposedly makes you hallucinate.

C: It heightens your perception. I guess you can hear the difference between tones and stuff. It improves your memory and makes you really aware... You know what it's like describing drugs, you just have to fucking experience it to know what's going on.



Photo by Michele Taylor

J: So you're waiting for San Francisco for that?

C: I probably won't have a chance to go.

D: Our tour manager wouldn't let us do it.

C: Oh, I'm going to.

K: We never do anything he says. Do you think he'll manage us the next time around?

J: It's not up to you?

K: Yeah, it is. We'd like to have him go on our next tour. We've been bad boys lately, missing interviews, missing sound check.

J: Talking to the people at your label, they seemed kind of pissed about the way the management company has been setting up interviews.

C: So many people want to interview us, we could do 10 interviews a day, each of us, and it just gets tedious. You just can't be grilled like that, you'll give a boring interview and it will make your life miserable.

J: What kind of stuff has everyone else asked you to talk about?

K: The label.

D: Sub-Pop.

C: "The Seattle Sound!"

K: Obvious questions. I understand why they ask these questions because we don't have "a story," we don't have much of a background so there's really nothing to ask.

J: So you're rather just...

K: I'd rather just TALK to people, rather than answering these questions. Here, sit down.

[Kurt moves a pile of books and makes room for me to sit]

J: Do you consider yourself more influenced by books than music?

K: No, not musically. I'm more influenced by our environment and my friends, television.... I've never written a song based on a book or anything I've read.

K: I might publish them if I can ever get around to editing all the things I've written. But I don't think I could ever do a spoken word. I'm not secure enough. It's a lot easier to stand behind a wall of guitar noise in public. It would probably rate a lot of practice. It was hate to start, like, reading for my friends and I can't even work up enough nerve to do that at this point.

J: That's strange, doing a rock show in front of 40,000 people and not being able to do a spoken show in front of maybe 20.

K: It's a way scarier thought to me. I just don't think I could.

J: (to Kurt): Have you ever seen a psychologist?

K: Yes, I had to go to a psychologist when I was about 12 because I refused to do schoolwork or anything else besides sit in my room. So I went to the psychologist. It was a family-counselor type thing and we had meetings with my family. We didn't come to any conclusions and I think it got too expensive so my family cancelled it. I really don't remember anything about it.

J: What was your relationship like with your parents when you were growing up?

K: Well, my parents got divorced and I moved in with my dad, and there was the typical Evil Stepmother scenario going on. She would be really mean to me and cook me bad meals and complain to my father about how irresponsible I was. So I was grounded a lot and I moved back and forth from relative to relative and back to my dad's house, over and over again. I eventually moved in

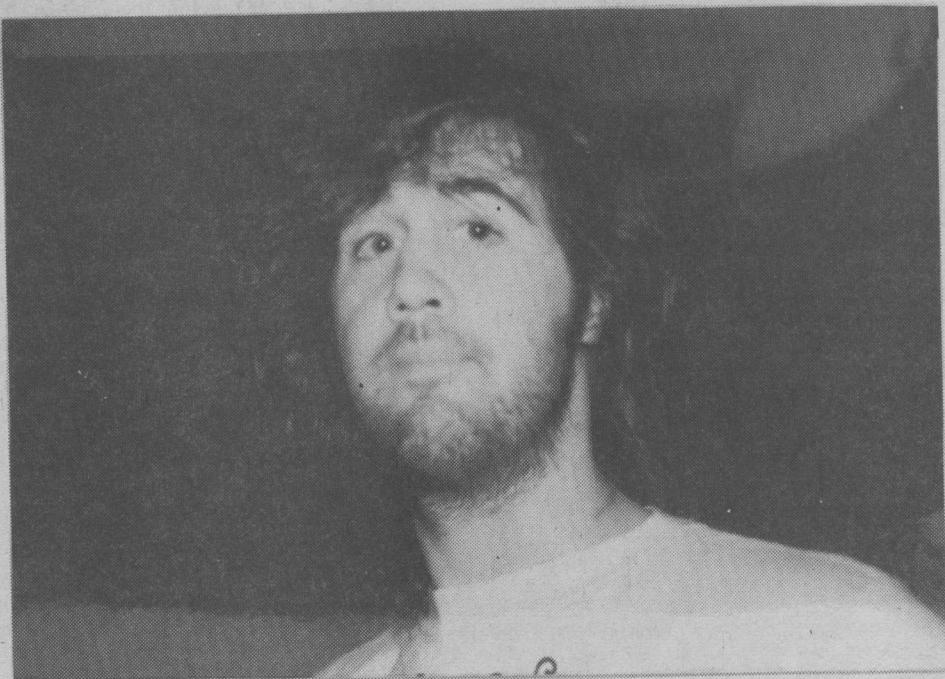


Photo by Johnny Puke

J: So, do you write for yourself. Like stories or anything?

K: Yeah, I write. But it's mostly just poetry, babbling...

J: Did you ever consider publishing any of it, or maybe doing some spoken word stuff?

with my mother around 9th grade and I lived there until I was in 11th grade, then my mom kicked me out. I brought home this girl, and we were having sex upstairs, and my mother... It was funny because we were trying to be really quiet and my mom kicked open the door. She looked about 20 feet tall, silhouetted by this blinding light

behind her, and she yells, "Get that whore out of my house!" So I packed up my stuff and moved out that night, and lived with some friends for a couple of weeks. Then I moved back to my father's house. By this time, our relationship wasn't very good at all, so I have to prove to them that I was more of a responsible person.

In order to prove it to them, he had me pawn my electric guitar, swear I would stop smoking marijuana, and join the Navy. So I pawned my guitar, went down to the recruiting office and took the test, and got a high score. So the recruiting officer comes to my house the next day and was ready for me to sign up. And I went downstairs and smoked a little big of pot, came back upstairs and announced to my father and his family that I would never seen them again. I packed up my things and left. I haven't seen them in six years.

J: Really?

K: Yeah, it's been even longer than that.

J: Your mother too?

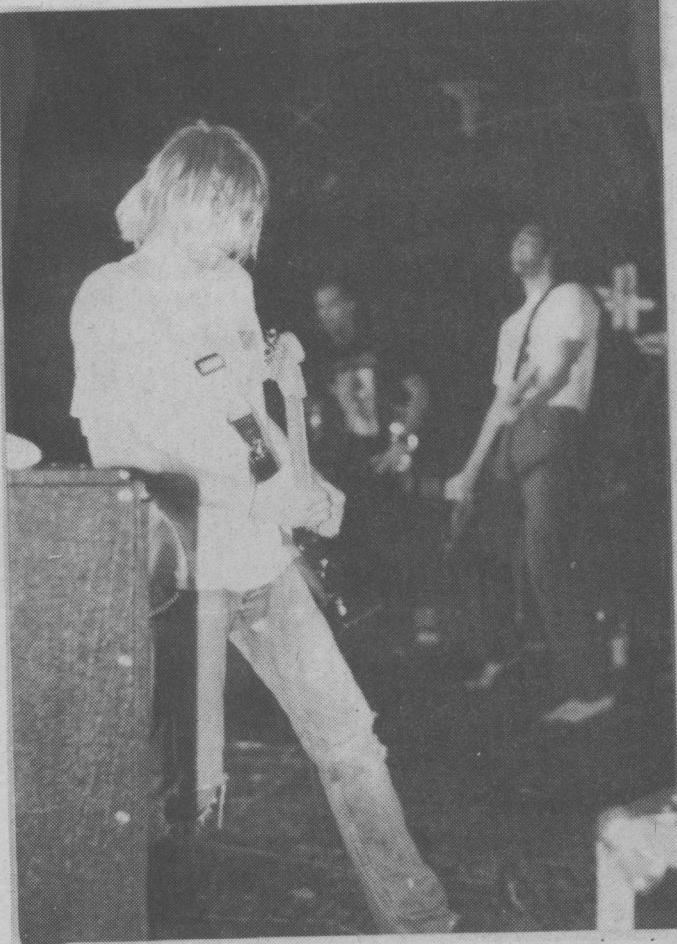


Photo by Johnny Puke

K: No, I still hang out with my mom. But I haven't talked to my dad in six years. (He laughs) I would be in the Navy right now. He's tried to contact me within the last year. He's told other family members that he's really proud of me now that I've become a successful rock musician and I'm making good for myself.

J: And he probably regrets making you pawn that guitar.

K: Well, he probably does. But I can't be stubborn for the rest of my life. I can't deny my father. So I'll probably eventually talk to him again.

J: Do you think it's weird that for a band as relatively young as Nirvana, you are so steeped in bootlegs?

K: Yeah, it is weird. Some bands find it flattering to have bootlegs out, but I don't really. I like the live stuff. Also, we've had a two year gap of releasing nothing, so I guess there's a demand for it, for hearing something by us. Most of these bootlegs are just... they can't even be considered demos because they're just things I recorded on a boombox with some friends. A few of the bootlegs are recordings we did with Butch Vig about a year and a half ago. We recorded an album for Sub-Pop before the whole getting-off-Sub-Pop deal, it took a long time to get off Sub-Pop and onto another deal.

J: I understand that Nevermind will carry the Sub-Pop label also.

K: Yeah, that was part of the buyout agreement, that and \$70,000. And a point for the next two albums.

J: What's a point?

K: A point is a percentage, 1 percent of sales of our next two albums.

J: Going back to the bootlegs, do they piss you off?

K: Like I said, I like the live stuff, but it's really embarrassing to have stuff out that you don't want out. Some of those songs weren't even finished, I hadn't even finished writing them. It pissed me off knowing that there are people out there making a lot of money off of us. I don't consider them fans. Most bootleggers are just scum.

J: Do you have most of the Nirvana boots that are out? Do the people who put them out ever send you copies?

K: I have a lot of them. But no, not at all, that really pissed me off. They should at least send us a couple.

J: I always got the impression that the Nirvana thing was more of a live thing as opposed to "product."

K: No, I think our recordings are just as vital. People can't expect us to put on a fantastic show every single night. We try hard but we get tired. It's getting really boring and expected of us to trash our equipment and jump around a lot, jump into the audience. We'll eventually tone down on that, we're still having fun doing that now. It'll be interesting to find out what people's reactions are to our live set in a couple of years, when we do tone down. Because I think that's what people expect all the time, so they might hate us if we just stand there and play like a normal band. It's a Catch 22 thing. If you keep doing stuff like that, you turn into a circus act. Maybe we should get some high wires and trampolines. Actually, we wanted to have a trampoline. Set it up in front of the stage, but I don't think insurance would allow it. I suppose it would be possible to get everyone to sign an insurance waiver as they entered the building. It would be kind of neat, having ropes hanging from the ceiling and stuff.

J: Let's talk about sex. What does "Polly" have to do with rape?

K: It's just a story about two people who are into S&M. The man kidnaps the woman Polly and attempts to rape her. Well, he does rape her and he keeps her in his house

for a while and they eventually fall in love. Then she escapes but she's afraid of being along, that's the whole story.

J: Where did the influence for that come from?

K: I really don't know.

J: Do you know anybody into S&M?

K: Not personally. I know some people who are but I don't KNOW them. I know this one guy who carries his sperm around in a little jar and drinks it whenever he can. He also makes a little art sculpture with pieces of his feces inside of them. They're hollow, little round art sculptures and he paints them and gives them to his friends....

One time, Beat Happening was playing at this place called The Boxing Club. It was a secret S&M men's society, like the Kiwanis of S&M. We went downstairs and broke into the secret part of the club and read a lot of literature on scatology. There were some really graphic pictures and they had all these shackles and things on the walls.

J: My roommate tells a story about when he worked at a nudist colony in Florida and this guy had a whole apartment covered in shit, back up in the heating ducts and on the ceiling. When the housekeeping people investigated a complaint about a strange odor, this guy answers the door naked and covered in shit.

K (laughing): I read about this guy who was arrested because he would put on a wet suit and jump in Sani-Cans. Do you know what a Sani-Can is? It's a portable toilet. Anyway, he would climb down in these things and masturbate and wait for people to shit on top of him.

D: I remember the first time I met Tomas, the singer from Beefeater. I always knew he was sort of a nut. The first time I met him, I was over at Dischord House, he came up and he had this necklace on and it had this big old dried up white piece of shit on it. I remember seeing it and thinking, Jesus Christ, this guy has a piece of shit on a necklace! And he wore it for a fucking year and a half and he never took it off.

K: There's a male stripper in Seattle called El Marko who can put a black ink marker up the shaft of his penis and write his name with it. One of those really big markers, y'know? He signs autographs and stuff with it.

K: I adopted a little kitten one night that had diarrhea and I woke up in the morning covered with diarrhea, kitty diarrhea, all over me.

J: I got shit on by a seagull the other day while I was talking to a bunch of tourists on my job.

D: My roommate Barrett moved over to England once for this girl, this very beautiful rich girl. They had a fling for about a week before she was to move to England. She wrote him all these postcards, like two a day, a called him all the time -- "Look, I need you here, I'll pay for everything, just come over!" So he flew over there, it's a really long story but she turned out to be this cheating asshole and she treated him like shit. She was sleeping with another guy in the same bed and stuff. He finally said, "Look, either you love me or you don't," so they had this big meeting in the park, and she was reading him this letter as they were sitting there. Stuff like "I love you but I can't be with you right now." She folded the letter up and they were sitting there quiet and sort of somber and this big pile of bird shit just lands right on her head!

D: I shit my pants in Barcelona. I had this flu really bad. It was like one of those "I think I have to fart - but it comes out shit" kind of things. We were at this grocery store and there was no bathroom so I had to sit there with shit in my pants for the next three hours. Nobody found out, either. Oh, here's a good one! Once I was on this lacross team and I was at practice and had diarrhea really bad. So I went up to the coach and told him I had to go really bad, and he said "All right, make it quick!" So I run down to the woods and took a really big shit, except it was total diarrhea. I felt like hell and I'd been down there for a while, and I knew the coach would be mad and make me do laps. So I got all these leaves and I start wiping my ass. Leaves don't work, so I still had shit all over my butt. Well, an hour and a half later, my friend's dad came to pick us up in his car. When we were in the car, my friend's dad says "Did someone step in dog shit?" We both were like, "I don't know." So he says, "check your cleats." So we're both sitting there checking our cleats and I know full well that it's my ass that's stinking.

J: So I guess talking about shit is better than talking about DGC or something.

D: They're the same thing.



Photo by Michele Taylor

AGITATORS - "No Brakes" 7" EP
Direct Hit, 3609 Perry Ave, Dallas TX 75226

Aptly titled, the Agitators' vinyl debut supplies us with four no-holds-barred, hard rockin' punk ditties, topping things off with an instrumental. If "Ag-I-Intro" is a sample of things to come and new material develops in this vein, watch for these guys. Don't mess with Texas! - Mike Harbin

FRANK ALLISON & THE ODD SOX - "Smart Ernest" EP

Collision

Imagine if you will a mellowed-out Tom Antona (from Alice Donut) fronting a mellowed-out Drivin' & Cryin', or maybe Buffalo Tom. Got it? Too bad Frank Allison doesn't sound as interesting as that might be. This EP is innocuous background music for bars, not memorable enough to be played twice. - Jodi Shapiro

ANIMAL CRACKERS - 7" EP

Thrashing Mad, 29 Perry St, NYC 10014

I heard this band broke up recently. Too bad, it's pretty good stuff. Punky hardcore that shows a 7 Seconds/Dead Kennedy's/Adrenalin O.D. influence. Lyrically, it's pretty serious stuff and the band only hits big with the right-on-target "You Heard It First On MTV," but musically it chugs along like the little engine that could, and did. - Tom Angelli

ANTISEEN - "People Killer"

Jettison

A bludgeoning (is there any other word for Antiseen?) lo-fi cover of the Talking Heads tune. I like Antiseen but this is stretching the redneck/mass murderer image a bit too thin. The b side is better, a slower throb with raygun guitar effects. Not a great single but it does have a classic Ed Gein victim cover. - Des Jr.

ASHTRAY - "Trailer" EP

Shoe, PO Box 42249, Philadelphia PA 19101

Heavy Velvet Underground influence here, which makes side A a real drag. In fact, I had to force myself to listen to the B side, but I'm glad I did. The VU was an overrated shit pop band but they did write a couple of wonderfully catchy tunes, and so does Ashtray. Regardless, if all their songs are as blatantly retro, even the occasional gem won't stain my blue jeans. - Ben Weasel

ASSASSINS OF GOD - "Pink Song"/"No Music Tonight"

Broken Records

A goofy sounding record that your Weird Al Yankovic-lovin' cousin would like. - Jodi S.

BATTERY - 7"

Deadlock

This is THE shit! Raw, crunchy, biting hardcore with tasty riffs and resonant vocals. Vocalist Brian Fury fills in the gap between singing and screaming really well on this loaded, aggressive 7-inch. The lyrics are in a typically vengeful, straightedge oriented vein, focusing more on failed friendships and anger rather than abstinence from drugs and alcohol. Comes with a really nice poster and lyric sheet. Good job. - John Lisa

BESERK - "Giant Robots"/"When I Think" 45

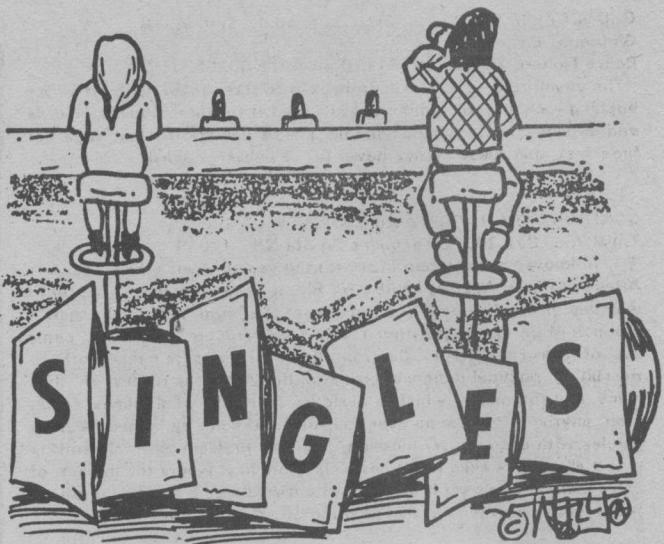
Merkin

"Giant Robots" is like a bad late-70's New Wave novelty tune, and thusly stinks. The B side, "When I Think," is much better, and gets extra points for the cow moo's on the last chorus. If these guys pursue the latter song's direction, which is a tough punk/pop number, I think they'd have more success than if they'd have more success. To reiterate: A-side, bad; B-side, better. - Des Jr.

BEWITCHED - "409"/"Junket's Theme"

No.6/Caroline

I admit it, the industrial cover of "409" seems totally pointless to me. At least the Beach Boys' version had a good beat. The flipside, however, is a lot of fun, a techno-splatter instrumental with real



drums (I think), slashing guitar riffs, a cyberpunk buzzsaw midi track and lots of funny and imaginative samples. - Jim Testa

BIG CHIEF - "Drive It Off"/"500 Reasons"

Get Hip, Box 666, Canonsburg PA 15317

If you took all the bass riffs from the best hard rock bands of the 70's and combined them on one record, you'd have yourself a good thing. But thanks to Big Chief, the work is done for you. Not to say that Barry Hensler (ex-Necros) and the gang are a rip off act; Big Chief are just the epitome of good hard rock without the crappy vocals and shit-for-brains lyrics. And this single couldn't be a finer sampling of how they do it. - Mike H.

BIGGER THAN GOD - "Speed Freaks With Guns" 7"

Reliable Records

This is filmmaker Joe Christ's musical project and it certainly sounds like movie music -- imagine a spaghetti western theme complete with mega-twangy guitar and wavering vocals, only the frontier isn't Dodge City but Avenue B, and the hombres don't pack six shooters, just hypos and crack vials. Cool. - Jim T.

BIG GULP - "We Came To Play" EP

Vandal Children, Box 260805, Hartford CT 06126

Boring hardcore funk with rap style vocals and moronic lyrics. With a clever song title like "Schauwuziertitz," you should be able to guess the mentality at work here. - Mike H.

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES - The Art Of Ballistics EP

Slap-A-Ham, PO Box 420843, San Francisco CA 94142

PC grindcore from California. What else do you need to know? - Des Jr.

CATHERINE - "Sparkle"/"Charmed (For Taylor)"

Limited Potential, Box 268586, Chicago IL 60626

It's bad enough that we have to put up with a seemingly endless invasion of British haircut bands that stare at their shoes and repeat the same wishy washy post-psychadelic, vaguely dancey drone, but now here it is coming from a bunch of guys who live in the same town as Screeching Weasel and the Cubs and really oughta know better. Sheesh. - Jim T.

CAVE CANEM - "Wishing Well"/"Waterfall"

PO Box 2108, Philadelphia PA 19103

Despite the presence of Electric Love Muffin's old rhythm section (Frank and Brian Campbell), it's Kate Heim's big-throated vocals that grab your attention. Part Janis Joplin, part Patti Smith, Heim belts out two post-psychadelic ballads with impressive range and charisma. Since I took Latin in high school, let me point out that the name means "Beware of the dog" and it's pronounced "Cah-vay cah-nem," not "cave canem" like they say in South Philly. - Jim T.

CHOOSEY MOTHERS - "My Girlfriend Is Gonna Beat Up Your Girlfriend" EP
Booze Fighter, PO Box 101511, Denver CO 80250

The cover boys of Grot #7 are back with three more rip-snortin' bar-hopping rock and roll numbers. I'm a sucker for three punchy chords and a singer who sounds like he chews vinegar-soaked rags for breakfast, and these mooks never fail to deliver. - Jim T.

CONFRONTATION - "Dead Against The War" EP

Tribal War, Box 20012 Tompkins Sq Sta NYC 10019

You know, back when I first started seeing bands like Citizen's Arrest and Born Against at ABC No Rio, it never dawned on me that I was witnessing the birth of a movement. Yet sure 'nuff, now there's a bunch of grindcore-influenced New York hardcore bands that came out of those early gigs. Confrontation lives up to its name both in the biting political defiance against authority that pervades all their lyrics and the music, which is basic hardcore played six times faster than anything Ray Cappo ever imagined and sung by someone who gurgles with Drano every morning. My only problem with this stuff is that it all sounds alike to me, especially on vinyl where the impact of personalities can't set it off (Citizen's Arrest was a good example of that -- generic on record, mesmerizing on stage). - Jim T.

CRACKERBASH - "Holiday" 3-song EP

Imp, PO Box 34, Portland OR 97207

This is a good, diverse EP. "Walk Back" is a droney tune with syncopated drumming and filtered vocals. "Holiday" switches things up and comes off with an emo edge, all urgent singing and choppy guitar figures. "All Work" is the closing instrumental, kind of fillerish but still swell. The production is clear and the packaging is cool. Everything works in favor of this band. I'd like to hear a few more from these guys. - Des Jr.

CRAYON - 7" EP

Harriet, PO Box 649, Cambridge MA 02238

Sounds like bored college kids playing boring noise music. - Tom A.

CRAZY ALICE - "Gone Away"/"Nowhere"

Sonic Bubblegum, 157 Murdock St #3, Brighton MA 02135

Four lads from Boston turned out a catchy, hook-filled, emotionally draining, sad little 7 inch here.

Reminiscent of poppy Dinosaur Jr., Soul Asylum, Goo Goo Dolls, and a touch of Stiff Little Fingers, I find nothing NOT to like about Crazy Alice except, maybe, for their name. Ah, but what's in a name, anyway?

"Gone Away" is a sad, harmony-filled, ready to take over college radio hit. And "Nowhere" adds to the chemistry a dash of Lemonheads. Keep your ears open for these guys. - Frank Phobia

CREAMERS - "Dead Weight"/"Stay With Me"

Triple X

I have liked everything I've heard from L.A.'s Creamers and this is no exception. Chugging rhythm and wonderfully off-key female vocals make the A side a real pleasure and the B-side (what I believe to be a Dictators cover, though I've never heard the original) is even better. I hear that these guys are a lot of fun live, too. So buy this record and hope that they tour through your town. I know I did and I am. - Des Jr.

CROWBAR MASSAGE - "Training Wheels"/"My Life"

Funky Mushroom, PO Box 100270, Brooklyn NY 11210

Crowbar Massage seems caught in some cosmic vortex, constantly shifting between two differing realities -- basic three-chord scum rock, and techno/industrial noise. On "Training Wheels," the combination of a rinky-dink punk tune and all the technological foofaraw piled on top of it makes for a few minutes of fun, but I couldn't get into the Side B instrumental at all. - Jim T.

DERELICTS - "I Don't Wanna Live" EP

Sub-Pop

I was watching this episode of CHIPS the other day, and there was this punk rock band called Pain that did evil things like snarl at little girls, throw cans of generic beer at cars, destroy bathrooms by

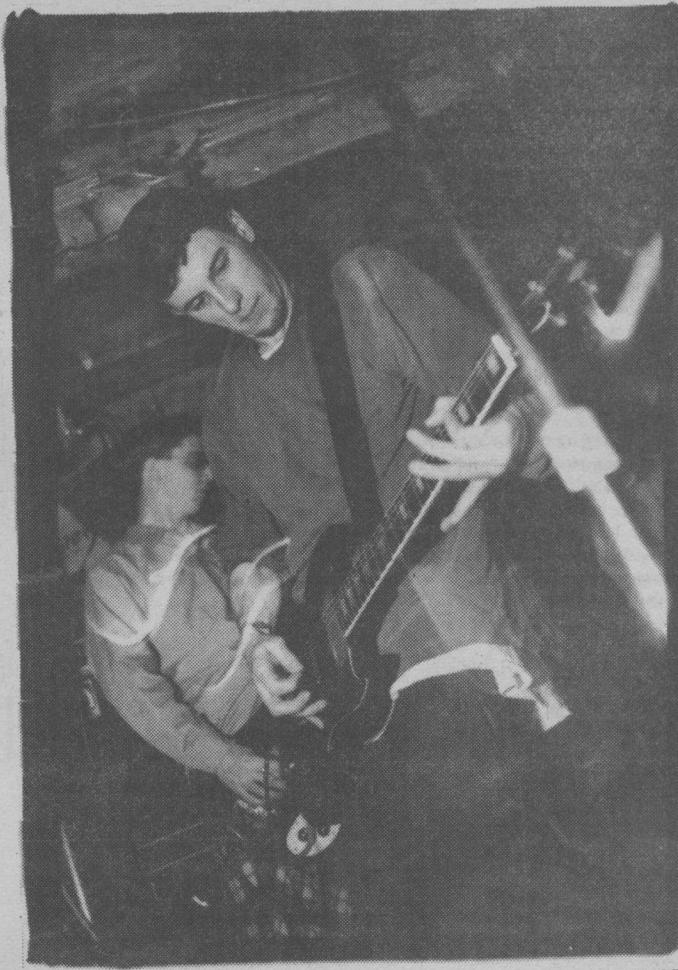


PHOTO BY SAM LAHOZ

GREYHOUSE

demolishing paper towel holders, and of course, spray-paint everything in sight. The Derelicts are a little better than Pain, but not much. There are moments of respectable in-your-face thrashin' and a few catchy hooks, but there's this PG-rated fog hanging over them. They're too safe. They use words like "crap." Oh yeah, then there's this whole Metallica-wannabe vocal thing happening. Either the singer listened to too much Dio during puberty, or he's really trying to cough something up, like a hairball. Know what I mean? - Dan Long

THE DEVIATORS - "Century 21" EP

Skene

This 3-song EP shows just how good the Deviators are when the production and whatnot are all together (something that hurt their song on the Benefit For Beer comp). Strong point-blank guitars and a lively rhythm section give each song zest and oodles of energy, and should have even the most apathetic squatters slamming - excuse me, pogoing -- at the Lucky 13 or the Pool Bar. The Deviators sound influenced by bands like (early) Social Distortion, Stiff Little Fingers, and the Clash -- which ain't bad at all. I'm friends of theirs so I might be biased, but who cares -- they're an amazing band. - Tom A.

DUNEBuggy - "Mexican Barbecue Camp"/"Cumberbund"

PO box 422, Rockport ME 04856

This would have been just dandy as a demo tape -- two kids, one on guitar and vocals, the other on drums; two simple punk tunes; 4-track production... Put it on vinyl and it's just another one of the 102 singles that came in our mail since last issue, most of which (like this one) were recorded for no apparent reason other than somebody's desire to put a record out. Doing your first single is kinda like sex, kids. Wait until you're ready for it or you're just gonna have a horrible experience that everyone involved with is gonna want to forget as soon as possible. Sorry. - Jim T.

EAST RIVER PIPE - "Ax! Or Iggy"/"Helmet On"
Hellgate, PO Box 6053, Astoria NY 11106

East River Pipe is one person, and as the insert says, one very talented person, capable of good, simplistic songwriting and musicianship. Laid back but with a good sense of emotion. Maybe like if Lou Reed could sing well. - Mike H.

ESKIMO NATION - "Immunization To Everything" EP
Underdog, PO Box 14182, Chicago IL 60614

This is a solid effort. It isn't really too memorable but everything here rocks and when it's on, I like it. Good production and the vocals are right out front. I'm not too crazy about the rap-style phrasing on "Theme," but since it's over in less than a minute, it's a small complaint. This record is worth taking a chance on. Clear yellow vinyl on my copy, if that matters. - Des Jr.

EVIL DEAN - EP
PO Box 15, State College PA 16801

A live EP from a kooky PA band. They're on some sort of goofy Satan kick which doesn't matter a whole hell of a lot, since they provide no lyrics. The music is punk rock until the breaks, which are filled in with pointless metal guitar solos. For a live recording, it's excellent quality and for some reason I still can't figure out, I found it entertaining. Only two songs here, pressed on colored vinyl. No great but better than most. - Ben W.

FARSIDE - "Keep My Soul Awake"
Crisis, Box 5232, Huntington Beach CA 92615-5232

In the photos on the inner sleeve, there are plenty of t-shirts like Uniform Choice, Underdog, and Inside Out, so I thought this would be more "moshing makes you sweat more than weight-lifting" hardcore. But it's more like college-radio, lite pop/core. Good music, esp. on the first side, cool lyrics and a singer named Popeye all get the nod from me, as did the whole ep except the quirky reggae-type change in the last song, which sounded sorta awkward. - Tom A.

FIDDLEHEAD - 7"
132 Windmont Dr, Atlanta GA 30329

This one's got sort of an emo/rock feel to it. A lot of young bands are doing this but not many are doing it well, and Fiddlehead really isn't an exception. It's not terrible or anything, just not anything to write home about. If you're into the later-period D.C. stuff (Soulside, Swiz), this might whet your whistle but I think I'll wait until they've written some catchier songs. Packaged in a plastic bag with a flap that glues on, which I found rather annoying. - Ben W.

FREAK BEANS - "Nurture The Seed" EP
Vermin Scum, 76 Summerfield St, Annapolis MD 21403

The same four songs as their demo, only with a much clearer mix, bring Annapolis' Freak Beans to vinyl for the first time. It's hard to describe their sound, it's a potent mixture of punk, hardcore, with a

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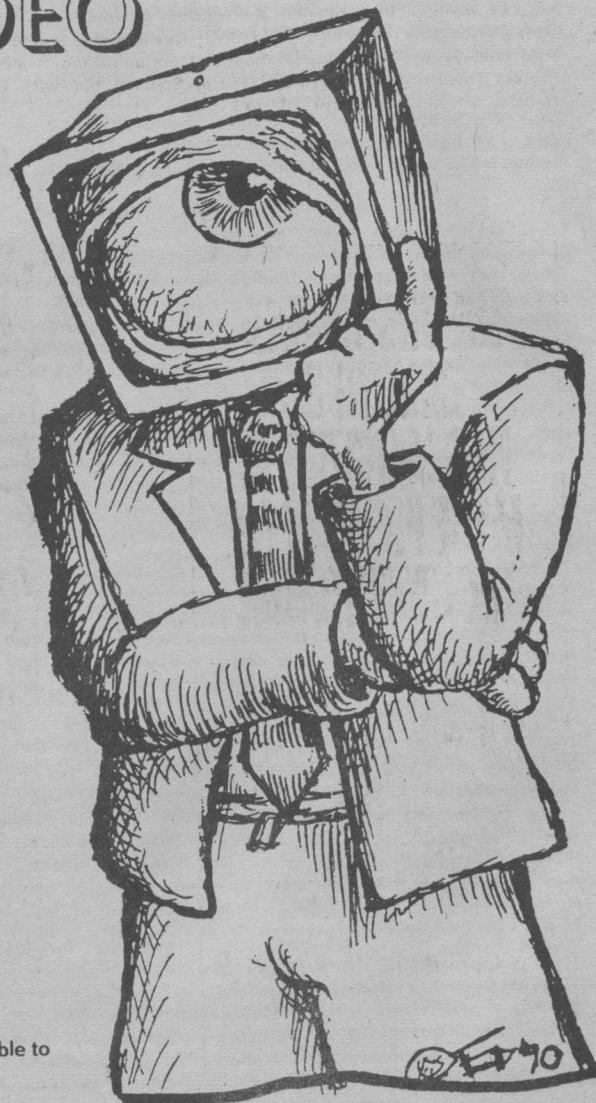
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lot of jazzy tempo changes and rhythms and a driving ferocity that I'd call hard funk if "funk" hadn't gotten such a bad name lately. An awesome picture sleeve makes this package well worth acquiring for the photos alone. You should see the fan mail these guys get! Rock gods and sex idols. Who could ask for more? - Jim T.

FURY - "Resurrection," 7"

THD, 2020 Seabury Ave, Minneapolis MN 55406

Holy shit, on the first listen you can't help but feel the seething hate that Fury brings forward. Recorded back in '89, this "project" consists of Ignition and Swiz members. Totally fucking great early D.C. hardcore sound, with brutal & aggressive vocals/music. No sedate shit to be found here. Too good -- a must have! - Tom A.

GIGANTIC - "Not 18"/"Short On Ideas"

Heat Blast, PO Box 491, Eatontown NJ 07724

Heat Blast keeps finding these cool bands from South Jersey that seem to exist just so they can play the Brighton Bar a few times a year and release a single to tantalize the rest of us. Gigantic's multi-tracked guitars and slurred, whiney vocals show a major Dinosaur Jr influence, but the songwriting's as strong as anything on, say, Swervedriver's lp, and shit, they're on a major label. - Jim T.

GOLPE JUSTO - 7" EP

Computer Crime, 74 Osborne Ave, Norwalk CT 06855

Jeff Spaz calls them "Puerto Rico's answer to Sick Of It All." Musically, yeah, maybe. They sound a lot like that musclebound bunch of tattooed lunkheads from NYC. Production-wise, Golpe Justo have as much in common with SOIA as Born Against has in common with the Go Go's. This EP sounds like it was recorded in a lunchbox. And lyrically, these guys don't seem as hung up on the macho trip. In fact, they write a pretty good lyric (in Spanish but with English translations on the sleeve). - Mike Lupica

GREEN MAGNET SCHOOL - "White People"/Ammonia Bath"

Sonic Bubblegum

Deranged guitar psychosis in the style of early Sonic Youth. "White People" has a driving beat that's a lot easier to like than the more laidback cacophony of "Ammonia Bath," but neither tune really gives you a clue about how goofy and entertaining they are on stage. - Jim T.

GREYHOUSE - "Revolution By Numbers" EP

Withering, PO Box 422, Mountain Lks, NJ 07046

Goodbye, Greyhouse, we hardly knew ye. Born out of the ashes of the original Separate Peace (a way cool band in their own right), Greyhouse packed as much intensity and musicianship into their music as their on-and-off-again spurts of activity would allow. But I don't think I ever heard a better band emerge from the roots of D.C. emocore, and this EP captures their style beautifully. "November 26th" is easily the equal of anything in the Fugazi songbook, while the other two tracks go beyond the band's more obvious influences. Check out how the two guitars work off one another, how the bass subtly follows its own ingenuous melodies, and how the vocals capture all the pain and passion of the lyrics. Really nice packaging too. Look for anything these guys do from here on as well as any future releases on this label. - Jim T.

HEMI - "Slow Leak" 7"

Big Money

Energy-packed, chugging guitar riffs, hard drumming and a singer with an interesting voice. This would sound right at home in between the Fluid and Green River. The flipis sort of lightweight Tad. Share and enjoy. - Jodi S.

IRON PROSTATE

"Rock N Roll Nursing Home"/"(I Am) Gilligan" (Screamin' Skull)

"Bring Me The Head Of Jerry Garcia"/"Volunteers" (Vital)

Two 45's from the oldest bunch of scum rockin' punks this side of the Dictators and man, you gotta love it. Okay, so I get off on the cheesy lyrics. So maybe you're too young for Jerry Garcia jokes and

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RATS OF UNUSUAL SIZE

PHOTO BY SAM LAHOZ

punk-rock Jefferson Airplane covers and Ramones spoofs. But check out the rampagin' singalong "I Am Gilligan;" the last time these old mosos did the tune at CBGB, some stage divin' teenage galoot kicked Johnny Puke upside the head so hard, he thought he was back in Manteo, North Carolina for about twenty minutes. Definitely the coolest band in New York at the moment, bar none. Punk rock is like sex; the older you get, the better you get at it. - Jim T.

JACK SCRATCH - "When Worlds Collide" EP
PO Box 146702, Chicago IL 60614

I admire this band's commitment to the 7-inch. The band's first release was a double-single, this one is a triple -- six songs on three disks, with a foldout picture sleeve full of clever cartoons. The music, on the other hand, reminds me of the days when my high school pals and I would cruise Rte 17 up near the New York border and play pinball in the roadside gin mills. Jack Scratch sounds like all the bar bands we used to hear. - Jim T.

JONES VERY - "Trains Of Thought" 7"
Jade Tree, 2310 Kennwynn Rd, Wilmington DE 19810

Vic Bondi has a way with words. Vic Bondi has a way with music. See Vic. See Vic's record. Buy Vic's record. Vocally, Bondi is an emotional storm; musically, Jones Very is the same, with churning guitars and driven bass lines. Unfortunately, Jones Very is no longer around - but I'm guessing it's just a matter of months till we see Vic again. - Mike H.

LEAVING TRAINS - "Rock N Roll Murder" 7"

SST

The title tune is perhaps the most idiotic (lyrically) thing I've ever heard. I guess they contend that there's a gigantic conspiracy afoot out there to kill outspoken rock stars. They inform us, through the course of the song, of the names of roughly 50 dead rock stars. If it's a joke, it's pretty dumb, and if it's serious, it's even dumber. The song takes up 5 minutes of previous vinyl. Flip the disc and you'll be subjected to the obligatory "PUNK" song that is the trademark of all the SST bands who play lame rock, but like to show their roots. This one is called "Fuck You God" and frankly, it was shocking and terrifying. Mom would not approve. Ironically, the last song IS pretty punk rock; it's a great little ditty entitled "Kids Wanna Know." What I wanna know is why SST though this disc needed to be released. - Ben W.

LESS IS MORE - 4 song EP
PO Box 410663, San Francisco CA 94141

Half of this EP would make you think that Less Is More is just another pop/punk band from the East Bay waiting for Lookout to sign them for an album deal. But the other two tunes have so many weird changes and loony chord progressions that it's obvious these guys do a lot more than drink beer with Green Day in their free time. And they're pals with Devon Morf too, so they're okay in my book. - Jim T.

LIFETIME - 7" EP
New Age, 1036 Mt Whitney Dr, Big Bear City CA 92314

Good quality hardcore with Verbal Assault/Dag Nastyish guitar work prevalent in the new breed of maturing straight edge bands. And also common to this development is "deep" soul-searching lyrics. I could be wrong, but these guys look a little young to be getting so worked up over the "good ol' days" they sing about. Good music, though. - Mike H.

LOW MEATO - "Young And Dumb" 7"
Vital Music

Put this one in the "what's the point?" category. Vital spends a lot of time and probably money on packaging their records well, but if the content sucks, it doesn't really make a difference. Low Meato plays a sort of funk/hard rock that at times reminded me of Dr. Hook, the Pat Travers Band and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, before they learned to play their instruments. Slick packaging and slick production but guys, you forgot to write good songs! - Ben W.

MAGNETIC FIELDS - 7"

Harriet

A beautiful voice puts forth sad but well-written song, only problem is that the accompanying music is annoying. It sounds like circus music. Still, I must confess to liking it. I wonder what a whole album would be like. - Tom Brebic

NEW BOMB TURKS/GAUNT Split 7-inch
Datapanik, 1992 B N High St, Columbus OH 43201

This is an awesome single. It's always great to hear bands I've never heard of making killer rock and roll like the NB Turks. They do two songs that fall somewhere along the lines of, say, the Celibate Rifles. Both numbers are great and the Turks' contributions to this EP have left me craving more. On side two, Gaunt takes two stabs similar to the first band, but rotten production takes away from their ability to move me like side one. Regardless, Gaunt shows a lot of potential and I'd put this record on your Must-Have list for '91. - Mike L.

NIBLICK HENBANE - "What's Your Deal?" 7"

Headache, 53 Myrtle Ave, Midland Pk NJ 07432

Back with their second single and a new singer, Niblick stay firmly in the place where they left off last time and give four hook-laden songs that are simple but really catchy and memorable. This time around, they cover "Angel In The Morning" and do an interesting job with some of the lyrics. The lyrics to the originals deal with day to day shit like senseless violence and people always pointing their finger. On green splattered, marble vinyl and a must-have. Dare I call this American/NJ Oi? - Tom A.



TRANSYLVIA

PHOTO BY MICHELE TAYLOR

NO FRAUD - "Elected" 4 song EP

Stiffpole

I never went to college. Sometimes I don't know how to use correct punctuation and I often spell things wrong. But there is one thing I do know, this new No Fraud EP fucking rips. Starting with "Elected" (the Alice Cooper hit) they go on to show musical depths with the minor chord and keyboard "Infidelity," and then all-out thrash appeal with "FTMYIYD." Dan Destructo's lyrics are always aware and often sardonic, while guitarist Pete Jay twists and bends notes like few have since, say, Dr. Know of "Rock For Light"-era Bad Brains. I listen to this frequently and think you'll like it too. - Des Jr.

OFFSPRING - "Baghdad" EP

Nemesis

A first-class production all the way, from the sound quality to the picture sleeve to the music. Offspring make SoCal anthemic hardcore much like Bad Religion, with big meaty hooks and exuberant, adolescent-sounding vocals that remind me of the Zero Boys. Not only that, but they read books (note the reference to Holden Caulfield in "Get It Right"), cover old blues tunes, and have the musical know-how to put some hardcore zing into middle eastern riffs as well. Good job. - Jim T.

ONION - 7"

Crisis

Starting off with "Falls Apart," Onion reminded me of MIA (their After The Fact lp) with mood-enticing harmonies intertwined with the vocals. Then the next song slaps you in the face with a big and bold hardcore-type structure. Same deal with the second side. It's cool to see a band change song styles and yet not do it just to be different. - Tom A.

OUR AMERICAN COUSINS - "Pandora 99" EP

Rockville

Our American Cousins stand out on the New York club scene like a crewcut in Seattle; where everybody else has gotten as grungy and dissonant as possible lately, these guys go for the pure rush of power-pop, with glistening guitar changes that transport me back to

the good old days of bands like the Records and Undertones and lots of other cool pop bands that you've probably never heard of. Yet the Cousins wrap their pop with unkempt punk-rock vocals and trashy cymbal crashes that recall more contempo acts like Superchunk. Three tasty tunes here and they're even better live. - Jim T.

PAIN TEENS/GOD & TEXAS - SPLIT 7"

Rave, PO Box 410209, San Francisco CA 94141

Nothing really new from the Pain Teens, who play their usual spooky brand of Industrial/S&M pain-noise dance/rock, with an evangelist ranting over the music throughout their cut. The flip finds God & Texas rocking out with an ultra-grungy, Seattlesque punk tune, heavy on the psychedelia. Pretty nifty 45, but Rave is pretty weak where packaging is concerned. - John L.

POP SMEAR - "Angel Talk"/"Gotta Go"

Harriet, PO Box 649, Cambridge MA 02238

Art-damaged noise punk, performed by six psychotic-looking women. For some reason, I would guess them to be from New York City. Actually, after glancing over their mug shots, I'm hesitant to say much more... - Mike H.

PORCELAIN BOYS - "Relive" EP

THD

Good poptoons from these guys. "Relive" is the hit and I like the way it breaks into a "Can't Explain" riff on the bridge. I haven't heard a song do that in a while. "Squeaky Clean" sounds dead on like something that Bill Stevenson would write. If you like to hear punk go pop, get this. - Des Jr.

SCROG - "You Are Here" 3 song EP

% Bill Rogers, 814 Daphne Dr, Brandon FL 33510

Big heavy ponderous riffs and angst-ridden vocals torture the ears of anyone who ventures too near a Scrog record. Yet this isn't "heavy" in, say, the Melvins sense; more like grindcore but with intelligible vocals and a more moderate beat. Whatever it is they're doing, it's fairly unique and they're getting better at it. - Jim T.



Our DANSE ASSEMBLY editor, Mick, accidentally loaded his Midi programs into his word processor and wound up printing out all the lyrics to "Jesus Built My Hot Rod" instead of his column this issue. We apologize to anyone who sent us industrial/danse records for review and we promise Mick will be back next issue. In his place, we offer this photo of Die Warzau by Michele Taylor.

RATS OF UNUSUAL SIZE - "Elephant Man" EP

Vital

Scum rock might not get the press it used to, but as long as the Rats are around, goofy punk rock overbrimming with humor and imagination will never die. It takes a lot of imagination to keep coming up with new uses for the same three chords, but these guys can do it, whether they're stealing a hit single from Fred Flintstone or covering the theme song for Razzles or writing their own maniacal odes to the Elephant Man and menstruation. Punk rock, man. Gotta love it. - Jim T.

SKEWBALD - "Grand Union" EP

Dischord

Dischord celebrates their 50th release with a record that sounds exactly like Minor Threat's first two 7 inches. That's because Skewbald was Ian MacKaye and Jeff Nelson's project during the period when Lyle Preslar was away at college and Minor Threat had temporarily disbanded. Eddie Janney and John Falls substitute on guitar and bass for Lyle and Brian Baker, but the two songs sound exactly like Minor Threat anyway. One-sided clear vinyl pressing makes this a little more exciting. - Mike H.

SLAP OF REALITY - Fletch EP

Snoop

"Radiate" is a great song. Acoustic intro that bursts into a charging rhythm, dropping to a stagger beat, melts into an acoustic bridge, back up to the gallop, and finally a stuttering outro. All the while the singer repeats spare, evocative lyrics. Real good, and memorable. "Where It's Going" is a more straightahead emo thing. I've been watching these guys grow up in my hometown of Tampa and "Radiate" proves they've finally come of age. - Des Jr.

SLASH BASTARD - "This Means War" EP

Stiffpole

These guys have been playing out in Tampa for years under one name (The Front) or another (Psycho Tribe) and frankly, I never gave 'em much credit. After this EP, I'm impressed. This is a solid, well produced set of simple riffs, thought-out lyrics and forceful playing. None of this is spectacular, but it rocks hard and the title track does ring around my head every once in a while. Check it out. - Des Jr.

SMALL FACTORY - "Suggestions" EP

Collision Time

Happy sounding, wispy pop. The kind that makes you sick, but strangely enough, this doesn't send me into sugarshock. Tinkly acoustic guitars, nasally voices and snappy drums dominate "Suggestions." The B side tunes are more of the same, and it's a welcome change from Wilson-Philips anyway. - Jodi S.

SMOKING POPES - "Inoculator" EP

Radius, PO Box 723, Lincolnshire IL 60069

This is a Chicago band who put their record out on a label so small, I bet Jersey Beat didn't even get a copy. I traded something with the label prez for my copy and it's the best trade I made all year. Quick punk laced with hopping melodies in the Husker Du vein, chainsaw guitars, you get the drift. Lots of bands have gone this direction lately, but Smoking Popes really excel. I highly recommend this one to all fans of Green Day and Jawbreaker. - Ben W.

SOFACHEAD - 7"

Profane Existence, Box 8722, Minneapolis MN 55408

This single was released some time ago but really shouldn't be overlooked. If my memory serves me correctly, the U.K.'s Sofahead called it quits a while back (I think). Too bad. They've given us three hard-hitting, raw, vivacious old-style PUNK tunes with really good male/female vocals and one well-written reggae cut, done with flair and energy. As with all Profane Existence releases, a good job but you'll have to go mailorder to get it, as these guys don't deal with major league distributors. - John L.

SOLOMON GRUNDY - "Spirit Of Radio"/"I'm Not The Freak"

New Alliance

Yeah, I like Rush. Wanna make something of it? So what if they're the real life Spinal Tap? I like 40-ft inflatable rabbits! So good ol' Van Conner takes a great song, kicks it in the ass with a fuzzed out wah wah and makes it a college-radio staple. And the flip is more Grundy original stuff, the same kind that made their debut so tasty. - Jodi S.

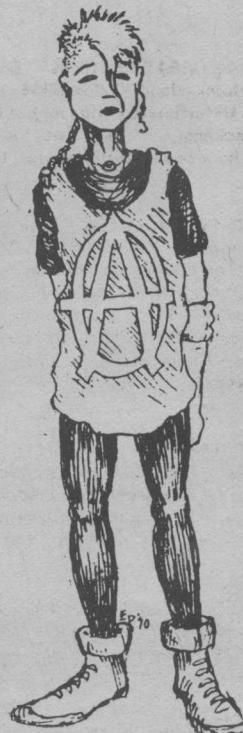
SPECIAL FORCES - "Red White & Blue" 3-song 7"

Shredder

Musically, this isn't bad at all. However, these songs have awful

**STICKS AND STONES**

PHOTO BY SAM LAHOZ



lyrics and an even worse singer. Sample lyric: "Military and Police/they all protect the rich/what can the poor do/except say Oh Shit!" I just can't get behind this, sorry. By the way, Lint from Oplvy was in this band briefly during these sessions, but that's not enough of a recommendation to buy it. - Des Jr.

STEAMIN' CUP O' JOE - "Jizzday Blooz" EP
% Jeff, 227 Winged Foot Dr, Shreveport LA 71106

The band's from Tallahassee although their sound is more San Francisco - specifically the punk/hardcore/funk hybrid coming out of bands like Primus and the Limbomaniacs. Here the funk's not too heavy and the riffing's kept to a minimum, and the guitarist knows his way around a blues progression better'n most punk rockers too. I could have done without another wacky song about puking, but "Jizzday Blooz" and "Freye" rock and bump along pretty good. - Jim T.

STICKS & STONES - "Coupe Flowers Can't Fail" EP
Skene!

NJ's Sticks & Stones have stuck around through so many personnel changes and near-catastrophes, you kinda wonder why they do it. Especially when they've lost their one trademark (originally they were the only hardcore band I knew of with keyboards) and now rely on tepid covers of old trash by P.E.D. and the DK's to fill out a five-song EP. The cover of Springsteen's "Atlantic City," on the other hand, delivered with folkie austerity, actually works pretty well. But the two originals are cluttered and sloppy and not original at all. - Jim T.

SUGARBURN - "Halfway Train"/"Cloudbreath"

Sonic Bubblegum

Underground power-pop with a guitar punch that's hard enough to keep me interested. Keeping the singles concept alive and well, and leaving me looking forward to an lp. - Tom B.

SWINGIN' TEENS - "Fire In My Head"/"Hey Brother"
Prospective, PO Box 6425, Minneapolis MN 55406

It's been a long time since the last Swingin' Teens lp, so this single comes as a welcome sign they're still alive and kickin'. Grungy pre-punk rock and roll is what the Teens serve up -- think Stooges, MC5, Dictators, or any cool band from the mid to late 70's with power chord hooks and snotty Johnny Thunderish vocals. - Jim T.

THIS GREAT RELIGION - "Nothing Is Wrong" 7"

Intermission, PO Box 5906, Whittier CA 90607

Unfortunately, this single's most redeeming quality is its innovative packaging. The music inside is rather boring, 10,000 Maniacs-influenced alternative pop. It's not bad, just not moving. - Mike H.

TOMMYKNOCKERS - "Noisy Beast" 7"

Dionysus

The title cut sounds like the theme from one of those cheesey-ass 60's spy flicks. Add a touch of distortion, some crunchy hooks, and you've got it! The flip side, called "More To Come," is a 1st class rock n' roll number with great leads and catchy vocals. I'll just call the Tommyknockers "70's pop rock riding a see saw with punk." - Mike L.

TRANSYLVIA - "Screaming In A Basement..." EP
Well-Primed, PO Box 351, New Brunswick NJ 08903

Yet another quality product from Well Primed. Mechanically cold and angry sounds with samples that touch upon industrial noise & grunge. A fistful of fury, freshly packaged on clear vinyl. - Tom B.

WAT TYLER - "Contemporary Farming Issues" 5-song EP
% Sean, the bottom flat, 3A Alexandria Dr., Gipsy Hill London U.K.
SE19 1AJ

British self-termed "football-core". I guess this stuff is OK to sing along to when you're drunk; but since I don't drink, I didn't get it. - Des Jr.

YOUTH GONE MAD - 7"

Vital Music

Well, I don't really like the idea of these ridiculous music clubs but it seems Vital's stuff is fairly easy to find, even if you're not in their club. Good thing, too, because this disc is definitely worth looking for. Straight up punk rock played fast & sloppy, in a White Flag/AOD vein. Contains 3 songs, all of which had me tapping my toes with a big dumb grin on my mug. If I wasn't such a cheapskate, I'd buy some of their other records. Give this one a shot. - Ben W.

GIVE ME BACK - 12" compilation
Ebullition, PO Box 680 Goleta CA 93116

Kent McClard and friends offer us a conceptual collection of songs about gender and sexuality. For the most part, the topics are represented by bad hardcore bands with cliched, unchallenging lyrics. Washington DC's Desiderata stick out like a sore thumb, driven with inspiration by Amanda MacKaye's tough, heartfelt lyrics and an originality unapparent in the majority of the other bands. [Note: this actually belonged with the album reviews but was received too late for inclusion, so I stuck it in this section, the last to be completed before we went to press - Editor] - Mike H.

LEVER - 7" compilation

Simple Machines, 3510 N 8th St, Arlington VA 22201

As to be expected from this D.C.-based label, we have here another quality release - one of a series of 7-inch compilations showcasing mostly lesser-known bands from the same area. Kristen and Jenny's newest offering features Severin (ex-Gray Matter, Swiz), with the best cut; Autoclave (sadly enough, a now-defunct all-female, eclectic pop band); Circus Lupus (Chris Thompson, ex-Ignition, fronting this deranged noise outfit); and Cleveland's all-female Scrawl, doing a Wire cover. All great stuff, and a label definitely worthy of your support due to their relentless dedication to a true alternative. - Mike H.

LOST AND FOUND PROMO SINGLE, 7" EP

Lost & Found, IM Moore 8, 3000 Hanover 1, Germany

Another interesting item from Germany's Lost & Found label. This promo single - which you probably won't be able to get - contains classic, vintage material like Government Issue live doing "Puppet On A String," and other D.C. acts like Void, Artificial Peace, and United Mutation. This also contains some overseas bands and the Straw Dogs and Fastbacks. Eight bands, with songs ranging from 32 seconds to 3:10, most under one and a half minutes. Great to hear some (mostly) manic, unpolished punk, and like the name of the label implies, most of their releases were "lost" - either demos, live records, or unreleased or out-of-print studio tracks - which this label has found and made available. If you're into classic, hard to find punk, you should at least write for their catalog. - Tom A.

MOUTHFUL OF MONKEY BILE - 7 song EP

Flush, PO Box 1050, Richmond CA 94802

Flush was famous for its tape comps for a long time, and now the label's doing it on vinyl. This EP gives you a bunch of fast, catchy hardcore bands -- Psycho Tribe has the most treble on their guitars and Gore Gore Girls has the most famous singer (Ben Weasel, in-between lineups of Screeching Weasel), which Youth Gone Mad offer the silliest song with the coolest backup harmonies, and Sockeye, who must be on a million comps by now, do another one of their wacky off-the-wall psychotronics. Hideous green pic sleeve and matching splatter-green vinyl complete a cool package. - Jim T.

FUCK STRAIGHT EDGE VOL. 2, 7" ep

Staple Gun, Box 867262, Piano TX 75086

Just Say No and Tesco Vee's Hate Police do two covers each (something I'll never comprehend), but it's kick ass. This ode to straight edge is on white vinyl and limited to 2000 copies. Hate Police shine, esp. on Gang Green's "Alcohol." Worth checking out. - Tom A.

Pan-
Cultural
Post-
Psychedelic
Pop

SPY

GODS

by Tom Brebic

SPY GODS is a four-piece from the New Brunswick, NJ, area who create that type of music that just eludes categorization. Their eclectic, multi-racial, multi-musical multi-cultural mix includes folk, rock, punk, new wave and tribal influences, all while managing some sort of consistency. This interview included the following band members and an excellent assortment of frozen mixed drinks: Bob Ramos ("Some people say New Brunswick is a college town, except for the college and the town"), drums and percussion; Robin Renee, vocals and keyboard; and Marcello "I Never Met A Sound I Didn't Like" McDonnell, guitar and noise.

Q: Tell me about some of your past musical efforts.

Marcello: In 1987, we did "Teaching The Mudheads To Dance." That was the first thing Robin and I did when we met. We recorded it in someone's living room on a cheezy 8-track in three hours. It was total feedback with no monitor facilities.

Q: Are you striving for a dance-type beat now in Spy Gods?

Marcello: Well, define "dance." I like rhythm, maybe we're a rhythmic rock band or "non western world pop-rock."

Bob: We're trying to bring in as many aspects with different musical influences from around the world. You can't just look at the music but have to understand the cultures from where the music comes. We have a moderate point of view. Robin writes a lot of politically aware lyrics of how these cultures interact. For example, we use Mayan Incanography and American tribal stuff or Warner Bros. cartoons. We're trying to say something in very intelligent, thoughtful, poetic lyrics.



Robin: We're not trying to be a clone band of house dance or alternative dance music, we're not trying to be just another band that fits that mold.

Bob: One of my favorite comments was that someone said that we each look like we should be in a different band. This band is a great creative outlet, and that has its pros and cons. Some people hate variety, and we're rather varied.

Q: What's different between your previous lp, Teaching The Mudheads, and your current demo tape?

SPY GODS

Marcello: Back then, it was more simplistic. A song called "Mr. Rabbit," the lyrics are from a slave field holler in the 1800's that I discovered in a song book and invented the music for. Later, I found out that Burl Ives did it in the 50's for a children's record.

Q: What's your relationship with Martin Atkins (of PiL and Brian Brain fame)?

Robin: He started a small label called Invisible which consisted of local New Brunswick bands while he was in Brian Brain, and put out one compilation album. We had a song on it called "Clown Man." He then joined Killing Joke and got married and moved to Chicago. I heard he did some stuff in Chicago later under the name Visible.

Marcello: He still owes me a hundred dollars. Tell him we said "hi."

Q: Tell me more about the demo.

Bob: On our latest demo, we had some management and they paid for us to do four songs on a 16 track. It's frustrating, everyone says we're so original, but as you know, today the business is so conservative. In a recession, they say the minorities suffer the most; in music, it's the original new bands that suffer the most because the big companies don't want to invest in them. For me, just to put something out - even if we don't get a pay check - that would be very rewarding to me.

Marcello: We've been pretty head's up business-wise. That's why it's taking us a while to get something out. That TwinTone thing was pretty much a musical rape case. When they heard our lp, they liked it, but they wanted a few changes so we had Martin Atkins redo our version of "Respect." We told TwinTone all we want is final approval of whatever they decided to put out. They said fine. They completely erased everything except for Robin's vocals, they added their own vocals, it was a complete butcher job, a total remix. We said no thank you and they didn't put anything out. But now we plan to put out another tape, a more professional sound with someone else at the controls producing.

Robin: I think producers are important at this point. You're just not as fresh when you're in the studio for days.

Bob: We're not a slick band, but there's that reggae-dub side that needs some effects. We're looking for a bigger budget, we're not a garage band that can do our tape in someone's basement or like, do it live. It's not that easy for us.^]

Marcello: Unless you have a studio to work in... I know of no new band that's mastered the recording console. we have control of picking the producer and having a dialogue with him.

Q: What are your intentions with this demo?

Bob: If you're a new band and you get picked up by a major, you have no clout. We'd settle for a mid-sized or smaller sized guy who'd take care of us.

Marcello: For new bands, it's tough, how many CD's at \$10 or \$12 a piece can a person buy? That and with the 21 drinking age, club attendance is low.

Q: I read an interview where Uncle Floyd said that during a recession, people will go out and spend more money on entertainment. Do you think that's true?

Marcello: Yes, but they won't buy new stuff, they'll stick with the old and classic rock. You can't take a chance on the new. Your average person these days will stay at home in his apartment and do the drug of their choice, be it TV or cable. There's no social interaction.

Bob: Some of this is planned. That whole block of people who were questioning things and had energy, they were just taken out of the game. Hopefully there will be a price revolution or an indie revival...

Marcello: Commercialism rears its ugly head; our music is off the wall but it's accessible. We're left out because the big guys think it's too wacky and the independents think it's too polished. There are too many niches in underground music where you have people who only listen to one thing. To us, the important thing is the songs, not how fast we can play guitar.

Robin: I think of music more as creating a mood as opposed to just showing chops or whatever.

Q: Any last comments?

Bob: We're trying to bring a lot of multi-cultural elements into our music, and we'd like to do college tours, but we'd like to have some product out too so people can remember us after they see us.

You can contact the Spy Gods and buy their demo by writing to Bob Ramos, 117 Benner St Apt C5, Highland Park, NJ 08904.

GROT FANZINE #7

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A FEW TIPS IF YOU'RE DOING A DEMO

It's one thing if you're sequencing an album, or producing an album-length tape that you're going to sell at shows or through the mail to fans. But if you're making a working demo - which is your band's resume', business card, and audition, all rolled into one -- they are a couple of rules to keep in mind:

1. Keep it short - three or four songs. If the demo is for the press, clubs, or labels, that's all they're going to need. If they want more, they'll ask for it. And trust me, short demos get listened to a lot faster than long ones.

2. Don't get fancy. You put your best song first, then your second best song, then your third best song. Don't think the first song will "set up" the second or anything like that; if the first song doesn't knock their socks off, the second song might never get played.

3. Press kits get lost. The tape should always have the band's name, the song titles, your name, address, and phone number on it. What could be worse than someone at a label or club getting your demo and liking it, and then not being able to reach you? If the tape is being sent to be reviewed, include the names of the band personnel. If you send a photo (and you should), identify the people in the photo on the back.

- Jim Testa

COUSIN IT - Demo

% House O' Pain, Box 120861, Nashville TN 37212

Basic two-fisted Rollins-esque hardcore with a few changes: The guitarist is awfully fond of his flange pedal, giving a lot of this a whooshing, swirling effect, and the band's not afraid to leave the simple 3-chord structure of the songs for excursions into weird, noisy improv shit. Hard and smart sounding at the same time. - Jim T.

GLUE GUN - "A Sticky Compilation" demo

28 1/2 Laidlaw Ave, Jersey City NJ 07306

Noli Novak's vocals have that tough, kittenish quality I identify with new-wavey combos like early Blondie and Romeo Void, and drummer Paddy Mike has been knocking around Hoboken in different bands since the New Wave era. Glue Gun's specialty is churning, garagey rock 'n roll with a lot of high-end guitar and percussion, with a slinky gothic beat. I'd like it more if it just didn't sound so dated. - Jim T.

GRIPWEEDS - Six song demo

PO Box 1721, New Brunswick NJ 08903

Retro 60's Rickenbacker folk/pop, with an all-too-obvious hard on for the Byrds. Nothing wrong with reworking an already-established genre, but you've got to bring something to the table, guys. The flat songwriting and uninspired vocals here just left me flat. Does it mean anything that these guys were a cover band for a long time before they wrote enough originals to make the changeover? - Jim T.

THE GRIEVOUS ANGELS - "4x3" demo

% C.J. Grogan, 28 Oxford Rd, Englishtown NJ 07726

Longtime readers might remember The Phantom 5, a 6T's psyche-rock combo we used to write about quite a bit. Chris Grogan from that band fronts the Grievous Angels and has kept the P5's garagey, psychedelic sound alive. For something recorded on a 4-track in a garage, this four-song demo doesn't sound bad, although the drums get muffled in the mix and the guitars sound so compressed that the "psychedelic" effects don't quite wash. But the tunes here have their moments, from the



Randumb Thoughts

© John Hill '91

near-perfect Byrds/Parsons lilt of "It All Comes Around" to Chris' big vocal number, "Dream" (reminiscent of the P5's big "hit," "Great Jones Street"). Chris' voice sounds a lot like his big brother Larry's - pinched, nasal, and slightly off-key, perfect for this sort of trashy revivalist rock 'n roll. - Jim T.

IGNORANCE, APATHY & PATRIOTISM - 6-song demo % Satan On A Stick, Box 6387, Annapolis MD 21401

A solo project by Alvin, guitarist of the Annapolis punk band Freak Beans. Acoustic guitar, vocals and some drums are all that adorn these gritty folk songs, with lyrics both political and personal. The lyrics bite with a grim sardonic edge, perfectly accompanied by Alvin's harsh yet not unpleasant voice. And if you've ever heard Freak Beans' aggressive sonic assault, you'll be impressed by the subtlety of the guitar playing. A nice piece of work. - Jim T.

LAST MAN STANDING - "Voluntary Exile" demo 156 Imperial Way, Edinboro PA 16412

When guitarist Jim Beveridge was in Erie, PA's Lost, his heavy metal guitar hero style created a distinct tension, working against singer Brian DiPlacido's terse, punk/hardcore songwriting. In his new band, Last Man Standing, Beveridge gets to indulge his metal tendencies a little more, but still exercises enough self-restraint to keep the solos short & searing. Singer Ben Frazier sings with the same sense of world-weary disgust that fueled the seething anger of Lost's best work, creating a clenched-jawed dynamic that propels these six songs into a place somewhere between metal and punk. Good stuff. - Jim T.

NO REFUND - "LP Advance Tape" demo % Manic Mgmt, PO Box 3154, Wayne NJ 07474

These four songs remind me a lot of early Murphy's Law - rapidfire Old School NY/Hc with funny lyrics. The band's got the chops and vocal technique to pull it off (you think it's easy playing everything this fast) and some of the lyrics are pretty funny. I bet they're a riot live. - Jim T.

MONKEY FEAR - 3 song demo

% Frank Phobia, PO Box 6257, Wyomissing PA 19601

There are two things wrong with this demo, and neither one has anything to do with the music (a. there's no address or phone number on the tape, and b., the best song comes second when it should always come first.) Okay, that said, Monkey Fear does the techno-industrial thing with hard rock overtones about as overpoweringly awesome as anybody since Nine Inch Nails. Ferocious vocals from Freddy Isetti (sounding nothing like he did in Reading, PA's headbanging Irandaru) assault the ears backed up by a barrage of live guitar and computer rhythm tracks, then spiced up with creative samples. Total wailing tortured angst spews out of all three tracks, with "Lust" (the second cut, shoulda been the first) so sinful it deserves an X rating (without so much as a 4-letter word in the lyrics). Hot shit, watch for these guys. - Jim T.

NATIVE NOD - Demo

% Chris & Danny Leo, 53 Park Pl., Bloomfield NJ 07003

For such a young band, Native Nod's got its act together. They play fast, angry hardcore about things that young teenagers dream about (like cars and girls). Chris Leo's adolescent voice - you can actually hear it changing as it cracks on every high note - captures the manic energy of the song, and these kids rehearse enough that they've got all this stuff down tighter than a pair of Axl Rose's pants. Today puberty...tomorrow, the world? - Jim T.

NOISE CULTURE - 2nd demo

Real Deal, Box 3162, Jamaica NY 11431

Noise Culture's first demo welded enraged, stomping funk-rock to caustic political lyrics about the plight of the poor and the inner city. On the band's second demo, singer Alan Baez (a Jersey Beat contributor, by the way) retains that angry edge, but the lyrics have become more personal, focusing on private rather than public demons. Hard, powerful riffs and no holds barred production separate this from the frat-rock fluff of most NY funk units. - Jim T.

THE SHIRK CIRCUS - Demo

85 Polvershon Rd, Nutley NJ 07110

My original review of this demo became totally superfluous when the band's drummer left, since I wrote at great length about how much I liked the drums here. Otherwise you have sort of whiney droney vocals without much energy over medium tempo punk tunes with hyper-speed tempo drums underneath. Next demo should say more about the band. - Jim T.

SPY GODS - Demo

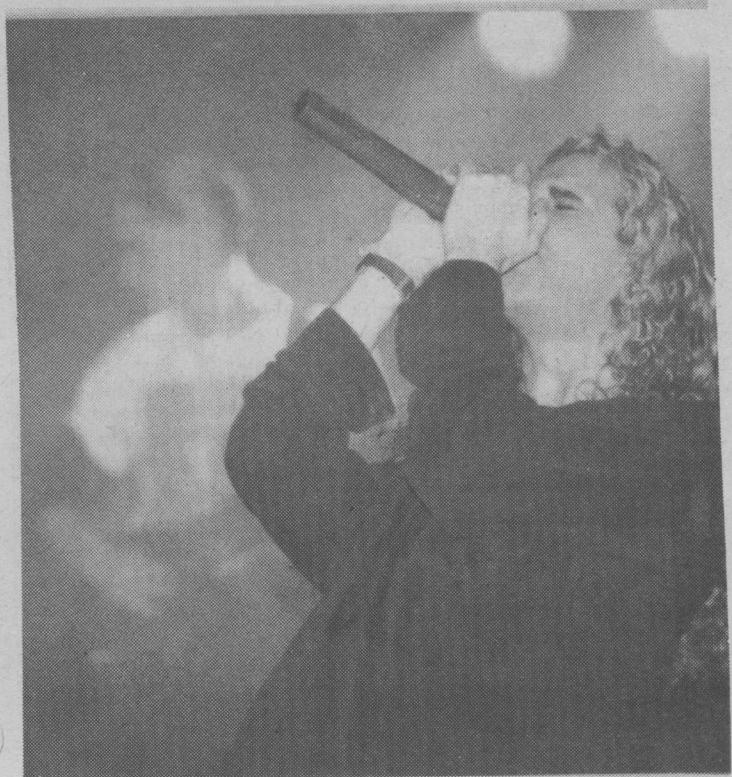
% Bob Ramos, 117 Bennet St. #C5, Highland Park NJ 08904

One of the most original and ambitious demos to come our way, New Brunswick's Spy Gods offer a world beat perspective on pop, with forays into everything from Afro-funk to Salsa to a Hendrix cover. They find a nice groove no matter what style they're adapting. - Jim T.

STICKMAN - Demo

% Ralph Malanga, 14 Dellmead Dr, Livingston NJ 07034

Stickman comes college-radio ready, equal parts U2 and Husker Du. Nothing wrong with that, but when you're working in such an overcrowded genre, it's important that your songwriting really stands out. Most of the songs here don't; they're inseparable from the stuff on a half dozen other demos I've heard this month. About the best track here is "Film A Riot," which is the third cut on the tape (and preceded by an inferior version of the same song called "Film O'Riela" - why?). - Jim T.



MONKEY FEAR

Photo by Jim Testa

TROJAN PONIES

"Eponymous Gunk" 4-song demo

% Jodi Sussman, PO Box 2968 Boston MA 02101

Three girls and a guy from Boston churning out melodic and rhythmic, original college-radio type pop. The band is only a little over a year old but proves that girls can actually play their instruments. All the tracks are likable but "I Wonder What He's Like In Bed" left me wondering about these college girls today... - Tom B.

WAX - "...And Slurpees For All" demo

% Paul Meaney, 1525 E 26 St Brooklyn NY 11229

My vote for Demo Of The Year goes to these young Brooklynites, who have given NYC its very own Mr. Bungle. An utterly weird and unpredictable fusion of jazz/rock, grindcore, hardcore pop and Zappaesque humor make every cut on this demo a rollercoaster ride through a sonic Coney Island house of horrors. Musicianship and production are first-rate (some of the guitar shit is mind boggling), the cover is a color xerox job with credits, photos, address, and track listings, and there are even some funny Looney Tunes samples woven into the songs. Now why don't these mooks ever play out? - Jim T.

ANTENNA - Sway (Mammoth) The male member of the Blake Babies along with the drummer and a couple of additions. Without Juliana Hatfield, they employ more punk and more garage-style lyrics. Basically, it's a harsher, more raucous version of the Blake Babies. Good stuff but nothing to get too excited about. One line that stood out was "I want to meet my maker/I want to kick his ass."

SKID ROW - Slave To The Grind - Atlantic

Ditching the innocuous pop image flaunted on their self-titled debut, Skid Row have recorded a true metal album, a barbarous ode to the scene of the early 80's. Like Judas Priest entangled in the fetid grips of Florida death metal, Slave To The Grind certifies Skid Row as defenders of the metal faith, the scurvy mouthpiece of youth gone anarchist, the tangible product of teen angst. This is the record Guns 'n' Roses should have made.

As the title indicates, STTG is about rebellion, mental chaos, and a "Fuck You" attitude. The title track is a harbinger of the album, a bloody fest of guttural growls clawing at thrashing riffs. When lead singer Sebastian Bach spits out the lines "There's no need to waste your prayers on me/ You'd better mark my words/ Cause I'm history" (from "STTG") he emphatically believes in his prophecy. His vocals on "Monkey Business" can scrape the plaque off your teeth at half volume. The middle cuts, although deliciously caustic, never quite match the intensity of the bookends; for all their brutal moments, the songs show the inherent difficulty of sustaining true heavy metal intensity for nearly an hour. "The Threat" sounds like Motley Crue on steroids and "Riot Act," which decries education and respecting others, is reminiscent of the cliched aroma of the Skid Row LP. The cowbell on "Creepshow" is baffling whereas the anti-establishment posing of "Livin' on a Chain Gang" is full of child-like bravado.

What completes the Skid Row transformation from pop stars to metal heathen is vastly improved songwriting, handled again by guitarist Dave Sabo and bassist Rachael Bolan, with input this time from Bach. The slower tunes, "Quicksand Jesus" and "Wasted Time," paint a vivid, and at times, unnerving picture of agitated youth. Although sincere in effort, Skid Row take themselves and their messages too seriously; life just isn't that glum for them. "Quicksand Jesus" explores religion with a naive inquisitiveness: "Are we ashamed of our own fate/ Or play the fool for our own sake/ Tell me who's behind the rain." As Bach articulates each word over the strains of an acoustic guitar, the urgency of which they are spoken adds a human dimension to the song. "Wasted Time" is a hard-nosed look at heroin abuse (an alleged former demon of Bach) that shows off his voice and range without compromising musical blast. The giant Bon Jovi diss on "Mudkicker," with its sludgy, thrash-infected riff and Bach's venomous growl, is an apt break from their pop roots: "But you a sapsucker/ You ain't gonna last/ Your twisted mouth feeds the mind of babies/ One man's fortune is another man's gain."

STTG is a masterful disc wrought with a depravity for the masses; it's an iconoclastic and defying piece of work out to alter the values of the 80's. At its most primal, the record can proudly stand alongside the works of Judas Priest and heyday Armored Saint; at its most commercial, it plugs the gaping hole between Priest and Poison. STTG establishes Skid Row as the beleaguered mouth of the teenage generation. A more scummy bunch there is not.

IMMOLATION -- Dawn of Possession -- ROADRACER

Eventually, the festering underbelly of New York would give rise to an equally malevolent and crusted growth. An entity ulcerating the pus and like-minded discharges of the city's beleaguered inhabitants, Immolation spew a wad of death onto a diseased landscape of noise. The vocals disgorge with a bilious stench, and the music atrophies those without a stomach for the demonic.

With bloodied titles like "Into Everlasting Fire," "Internal Decadence," and "No Forgiveness (Without Bloodshed)," Immolation take New York one growl closer to their true sanctum -- hell. (Of course, pending one's belief in this devil shit.)

TESLA - Psychotic Supper -- GEFFEN RECORDS

Tesla are defensive: They are not an acoustic band and they waste no time in making that point. Psychotic Supper, the group's third studio disc, opens with a chanting scream that combusts into a riff to make the Priest proud, a paralyzing gust of pent-up anger and resentment. The 13 tracks that comprise Supper each travel their own road to arrive at a singular conclusion: Regardless of last year's success with Five Man Acoustical Jam, Tesla is a blue jeans rock n' roll band. To prove the point, Psychotic Supper is the heaviest offering yet.

But missing in this 13-song effort is 13 memorable songs. For nearly the entire side 2, the album loses all semblance of originality. Rehashing tired riffs and forgettable melodies, the band falls prey to their own desire of making the definitive Tesla hard rock record.



by Craig Donner

It's fortunate, then, that Supper's first half captures everything the second didn't. The opening track, "Change In the Weather," foreshadows the seething potency of tunes like the condemning "Edison's Medicine" and the crushing "Don't De-Rock Me." "Change"'s groove is achingly addictive, a tight-knit seam supporting the girth of Tommy Skeoch and Frank Hannon's bulging riff. Singer Jeff Keith intercepts Skeoch's dizzying solo that opens "Edison's Medicine" with a truly great heavy metal scream, a massive, malignant belch that ranks alongside those of Brian Johnson and Ronnie James Dio. Besides Skeoch's experimental -- and absolutely annoying -- solo, the tune is one of the album's finest. "Don't De-Rock Me" is speed metal carnage, a triumphant reading of the genre, like Olivier performing Shakespeare. Drummer Troy Luccketta, harnessing the disc with his most intensive work to date, kicks a solo here that jars every bone in the body.

The much-publicized friction between the Tesla bandmates prior to recording Psychotic Supper seemingly played a role in shaping the disc's furious opening pace. On a tune like "Edison's Medicine" or "Don't De-Rock Me" one can almost visualize Jeff Keith strangling Frank Hannon in a half nelson or Troy Lucketta suplexing bassist Brian Wheat off the top turnbuckle. But the rancor eventually gives way to friendship, and the music slips a degree in its fury. Psychotic Supper succeeds on one level: it re-establishes Tesla as a formidable hard rock band. It fails in establishing itself as the definitive Tesla hard rock record.

THE SCREAM -- Let It Scream -- HOLLYWOOD RECORDS

I have to admit that by the seventh song of The Scream's debut album, Let It Scream, I shut it off. The prospect of listening to five additional Scream songs, a dish of empty-calorie metal flab, was about as enticing as trimming the hair under Tad's underarms. When striped of their pouty faces and ruffled shirts (a warning sign in and of itself) The Scream are an annoying hair band with little to say and even less talent to back it up. The hokiness of a tune like "I Believe in Me," with the line "You can be the branch, I'll always be the tree," or the insipid verse "I wanna push, push, push it in ya honey/ You burn me up inside" ("Give It Up") rarely flutters one's heart, especially a guy's.

NON-FICTION -- Preface -- GRAND SLAMM RECORDS

Like a sick mutation of Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin, Non-Fiction mash out a roily hybrid of noise on Preface, their debut disc. The work is a masterpiece of unabashed distortion and shrilling vocals smelted into musical sludge. The opening track, "The My Way,"

throws meaty guitars into a stew of Sabbathian riffing and droning pacing; much of the time, Non-Fiction sound like a more concise Soundgarden, a band keener of structure and form.

Regardless of Preface's brilliance, Non-Fiction's crowning glory is their breeding of long, hard, thrusting headbanging. "Listen" jams a groove in the neck to nullify years of chiropractic work. Singer Alan Tecchio rides guitarist Dan Lorenzo's riff like a canoe hugging white water rapids. He creates a dizzying tension on the droning ballad "Mortify Me" where the effect is of getting all 32 teeth pulled at once -- and never experiencing a more morbidly delightful affair. The marvelous "Could've" and the deceptively slow "Put It Off" round out the brilliance of Preface. The coda, "Farewell to Welfare," wallows in such wonderous muck that one can lapse into a permanent stupor without warning. The only clunker here is "Aged," which drags on for hours.

An album as musically potent as Preface should not be simply listened to; it should be swallowed in, savored like a thick side of beef. Non-Fiction have not recorded just an album -- they have crafted a state of musical bliss.

MIDIAN -- The Last War -- 137 Graham Terrace, Saddlebrook, NJ 07662

Even if one ignores the abysmal production of The Last War, Midian's 4-song demo is indicative of speed metal's shortcomings; too many bands equate playing fast with creating music. Everything on this tape is futile because no genuine signs of creativity are outstanding, or for that fact, merely present. The singer sways from a caterwaul to an impressively cool death metal growl; unfortunately, it's like indiscriminately mixing sundry alcohols: The idea appears feasible, but the resultant pile is helplessly undesirable. The Last War is a case of playing fast for the sake of playing fast. But not playing well.

KING PENGUIN -- fresh -- c/o TRX Management

"fresh," the latest demo from Jersey's King Penguin (formerly SideKixx), does more than showcases two of the band's songs (and an oddly included jazz instrumental, "Opus 69"). It shows them to be astute marketers, the factor that usually separates the bands who get signed from the ones who don't. The packaging is professional, the tape's sound quality is excellent, and other than leaving the address off the J-card, fresh is the model band demo.

The song's are a bit derivative, but what isn't in commercial hard rock? The vocals require a bit more refining, possibly some studio effects, but overall, fresh proves that King Penguin know what it takes to get a record deal. Nowadays, that seems to be enough.

SACRED REICH -- A Question -- HOLLYWOOD RECORDS

Not content with merely pulverizing the guitar/bass/drum structure, Sacred Reich descend deeper into speed metal mayhem with the ponderingly-titled "A Question." The three-song EP features an amazing cover of Fear's classic punk anthem "Let's Have A War." Doused with impetuous guitar work and a malicious carpet bombing of drums, the tune transcends its punk roots to become the archetype speed metal track. New drummer Dave McClain lays down an exaggerated beat that consumes the song itself. The previously released "Who's To Blame" (off the American LP) shifts from breakneck speed to a velocity unachieved by today's metallurgists. The EP's lone new cut, the title track, is the weakest of the three, if only because the thick swamp of guitars never explode; an extended mosh bridge that may prove crushing in concert is, ostensibly, needless on vinyl.

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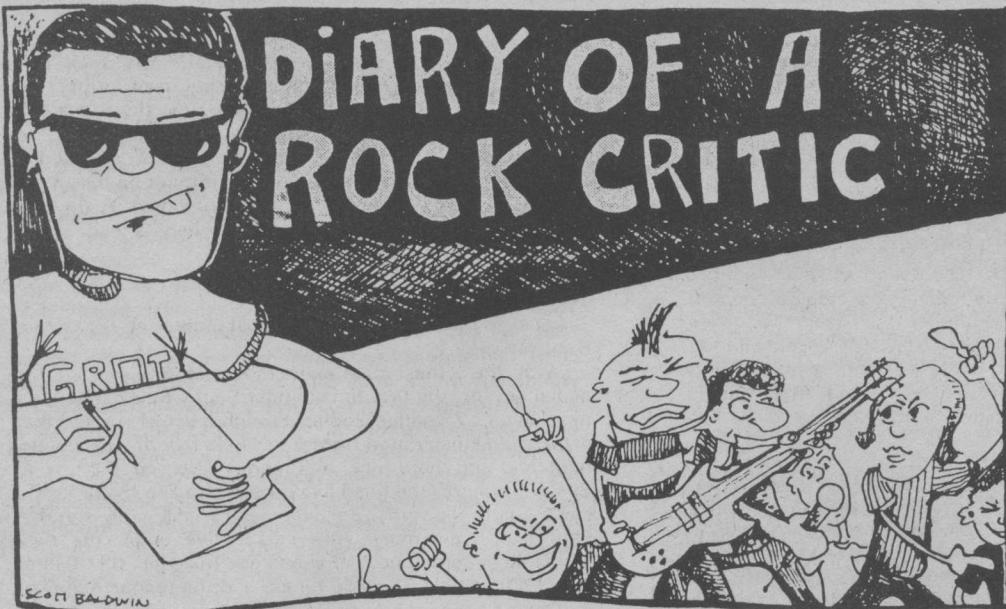
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

Crashwagon, Ironworks, American Standard at The Spiral, NYC.

Nothing like going out on a Saturday night and finding out that the show you're going to see will be starting an hour later than you figured... Even better is sharing sidewalk space with a posse of brain-damaged punk-rock cretins dressed like extras in an Exploited video, right down to a 2-foot high mohawk on one nitwit and the usual jackboots & flannel shirts. In between kicking large piles of trash and trying to pick fights, these guys amused themselves by screaming "Punks and Skins unite, oi!" at the top of their lungs for about twenty minutes. Sad, really. Twelve years late and a chromosome short. Whaddaya gonna do?

Showtime finally rolled around and we all ambled down to The Spiral's cozy downstairs performance space, sort of a cross between a livingroom and Freddy Krueger's basement of horrors. The stifling heat and cramped quarters didn't deter Crashwagon from putting on quite the decent show. You probably haven't heard the name yet but you might recognize the faces (assuming you're a fan of NY/HC) since Crashwagon is 3/4 of the late Supertouch - drums, guitar, and bass - with a new singer, an energetic kid with a shaved head and lots of pizzazz. The new songs seem crunchier, the riffs more imaginative, the melodies more distinctive, the bass throblier and more pronounced. Then again, all of that might have been there all along (these are the same musicians, after all) and I just never noticed because of Supertouch's phlegmatic frontman, Mark.

After a short (well, actually, quite a long) intermission, Ironworks came on for a set of industrial noisecore that peeled what little paint was left on the walls. None of that sissy "danse" stuff for these boys, Ironworks' sound is all about distortion, volume, feedback, screamed vocals, and pounding synthesized percussion, guaranteed to make your ears bleed.

Finally, just as dawn was about to break over the Manhattan Bridge, American Standard came on, singer Bill Dolan resplendent in a dayglo orange jumpsuit that made him look like an escapee from a nuclear-powered insane asylum. Previewing songs from the Blackout Records EP and crushing skulls with powerful versions of the old favorites like "Grin" and "Ace Of Spades," the AmStand crew made the long evening well worth the wait and the brush with those skinheads outside.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

Uncommon Society, The Fixtures and Trusty at ABC No Rio

Why is it that when cool out-of-town bands come to play ABC No Rio, the audience stays home. A select few very cool people turned out to see Toronto's Uncommon Society, who seemed undeterred (luckily, they were still enjoying the high from a killer show in Buffalo the night before; although if I had driven all night to play for 20 people, I woulda been pissed). Like a lot of Canadian bands, Uncommon Society tend to be a bit imitative; in this case, the primary influence was that All/Doughboys pop-core thing with way catchy tunes played at breakneck speed. Still, they were tight, looked good, and exuded that wonderful sense of fun that makes rock'n roll gigs like this worthwhile.

The Fixtures have been around quite a while and sounded like it; their music seemed a bit dated, based around early 80's hardcore with a big debt to the Dead Kennedys (right up to a Jello Biafra-ish warble to the singer/drummer's vocals).

Trusty hail from Arkansas and were in the middle of a very long tour. Since their regular bassist couldn't stay away for so long a time, they recruited ex-Admiral Mike Harbin to fill in, who added a refreshing dash of punk-rock anarchy to this combo's usual tight-as-Calvin-jeans popcore. The band's two singers - one a big, heavyset guy, the other a little fella with a high voice - harmonized well even with ABC No Rio's horrible acoustics and p.a. to work with, and the tunes bounced along merrily, with lots of funny banter in between. It was a good show. You shoulda been there.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19

Rise and The Asexuals at Club L'Impossible, Quebec City

Badly in need of a vacation, I imposed on my friend John Pastore and took a trip to Montreal. It's a beautiful city and well worth a visit, although American visitors should be advised that everything there (even given the currency exchange; I got about \$1.14 American for every Canadian dollar) is much more expensive than even here in New York, where we always complain about how expensive everything is. To give you a quick idea of simple basics: A bus or subway ride is \$1.50, a newspaper costs 50 cents with 8 cents tax added on top (they tax everything, even postage stamps) and beer goes for about \$8 a six pack.

Luckily, John's band The Rise had a show that weekend in Quebec City with veteran Canadian scenesters The Asexuals. The crowd was very much what you'd get for the same show in the States; mostly kids from 15 to 20, with a wide variety of funny haircuts. There seemed to be an awful lot of girls in the crowd for a hardcore show, which was nice to see.

Although I've been a big fan of Rise, I'd only seen them once and that was under less than ideal circumstances, with two different members. The band had since changed its rhythm section, picking up a Finnish skatepunk named Klaus on bass and a new drummer that everyone called Bobo. They sounded great, with Sylvain's vocals just as powerful and commanding as they are on record. Rise's strength comes from those pipes and the band's songwriting, filled with memorable riffs and melodies.



UNCOMMON SOCIETY

The Asexuals are one of those bands that usually bring the response, "oh, are they still around?" Yes they are, although their hair is a lot longer than it used to be, and the songs are getting a little shaggy around the edges too. With a casual garagey manner that recalled the Replacements, the band played a long set of sloppy but engaging hardcore pop tunes. Still, it must be hard to be in a band that's been around for six or seven years and whose only memorable moment was when its lead singer quit the start the Doughboys.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24

7 League Boots and American Standard at Maxwells, Hoboken

With the other three ex-members of Soulside in the audience for the first time, singer Bobby Sullivan led his new band, 7 League Boots, through a set of songs that drew equal inspiration from Soulside's mix of Dischordian hardcore and hard rock, and reggae. No one I know in Boston, where the band lives, seems to like them, but I can't figure out why. Sullivan's voice still cuts through hard and heavy music with a distinctive edge, the rock songs have some chord changes and melodies that remind me of a lot of old Soulside tunes, and the reggae numbers don't go on too long or seem gratuitous. Granted, there's a certain amount of cultural irony that's gonna slip in when you've got a Irish kid named Sullivan with knee-length dreadlocks fronting a band heavily influenced by D.C. emo-core. Like the reggae song "Sister" that's about women's rights, for instance; obviously, Bobby's into Rastarianism for the haircut and the beat, but not some of that religion's more dubious social tenets.

Not much to say about American Standard that we didn't already cover in the early review. That old bugaboo about "consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds" obviously didn't come from someone who spent a lot of money going out to see bands. I treasure any group who delivers a quality show every time you see them, and that's American Standard. It'll be interesting to see what happens next June when Matt, the youngest member, graduates from college and the band begins a year-long, full-time push at making a go of it.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26

1.6 Band, Merel and Born Against at ABC No Rio

Quite a change here from a few weeks ago; with Born Against on the bill, the place was packed before the first band had even gone on. The 1.6 Band, from Long Island, surprised me, actually; they did all the things you normally wouldn't expect from such a young outfit. Good stage presence, tight and disciplined on stage, and the songs had a lot of power, working in some cool tempo changes and riffs. NJ's Merel is very much the same kind of band, young hardcore kids with an ear for songs, who know how to work a stage and whose set improves every time I see them.

But Born Against was the big story here and they did not disappoint. Lead singer Sam McPheeters is famous as a scene blowhard, although I usually find his onstage rants - about subjects as diverse as religion and beer drinking - to be unfocused and disjointed. Not so today. The man came prepared.

Thing started out with about 20 minutes of the usual Born Against powerchord blitzkrieg hardcore, Sam spazzing out on vocals and the band slamming home the breaks with their usual iron-fisted energy. Then the band went into this hard riff and just keep repeating it, over and over, while McPheeters shut up and started holding up a series of white cardboard placards. Each poster had only one, two or three words on it, so the following message was telegraphed, bit by bit, but you have to picture it: The

small basement club space packed with wall to wall people, the pit moshing in waves in front of the stage, the band smashing the air with this monster hook, over and over, and this message coming from the signs in McPheeters' hands:

ATTENTION:
THE FOLLOWING BANDS HAVE PLAYED ABC NO RIO

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...and so on, through about a dozen bands, each name greeted by a smattering of applause and cheers.

AT EACH OF THESE SHOWS,
ONLY 30, OR 20, OR 10, OR NONE OF YOU CAME..
TODAY, THERE ARE 125 PEOPLE HERE
FOR A LOCAL BAND THAT PLAYS ALMOST
EVERY OTHER WEEK.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE SCENE.

PLEASE FUCK OFF.

With that, McPheeters puts down the last poster, the band stops playing, and there's this awed, stunned silence. End of show.

Bravo.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31

Poster Children, Doughboys, and Superchunk at Maxwells

Three of my favorite bands on one bill at my favorite club? Too good to be true, but thanks to the heavy booking schedule that comes with the annual rite of CMJ's Music Marathon convention, here they were. Poster Children started things off loud and sassy, tossing Halloween candy kisses at the crowd and cranking their amps up to ear-splitting volume for a short but potent set of their wall-to-wall powerchord pop. The kids all pushed to the front for the Doughboys, but seemed pretty sedate (by hardcore gig standards anyway) until about 2/3 through the set, when all hell broke loose and teenage bodies started flying over the crowd like low-flying reconnaissance planes looking for a safe spot to land. Nobody stage dives anymore and it was really too crowded in Maxwells to slambase, so the kids just jump up on top of one another and get passed around the room. The Doughboys sounded great, but then they usually do, with that new bass player adding a lot in the way of harmony vocals.

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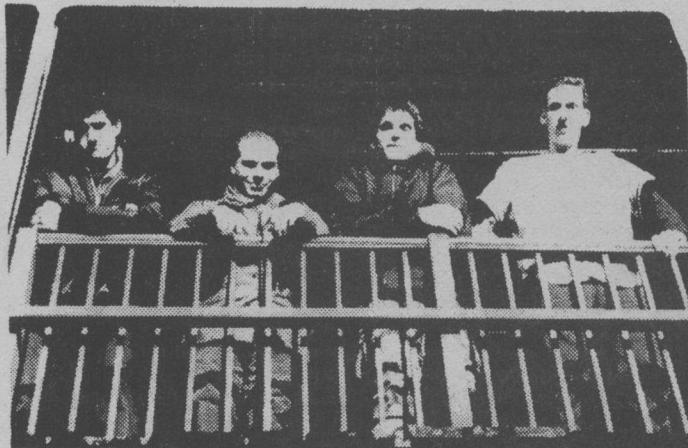
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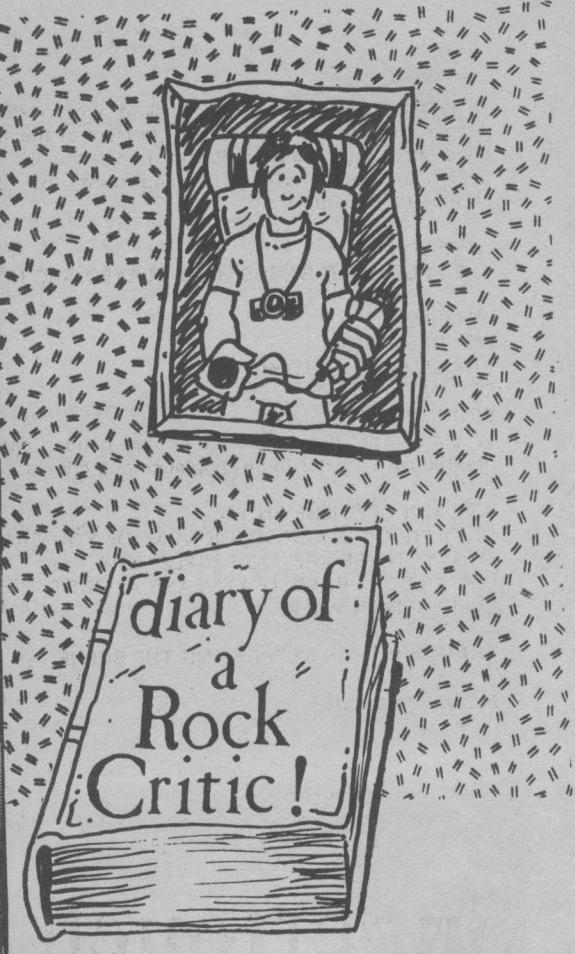
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Matt

AMERICAN STANDARD

If you asked me to pick my favorite live band right now, Superchunk would be in the Top 3 and, depending on my mood, probably wind up first or second. And for this show - in the unenviable position of following the Doughboys' high-energy power-pop mosh - they played everything a little faster than usual. Crowd favorites like "Cool" and "Slack Motherfucker" merged just fine with tunes from the band's brand-new album. Where bands like Husker Du and Soul Asylum were a few years ago, that's where Superchunk is right now. As good as it gets, and getting better all the time.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Kind of a weird night, this being the meat of the CMJ Music Marathon and all. Having indulged myself with three bands that I'd seen gobs of times last night, I vowed to only see bands I'd never seen before tonight. With Ann Carlson, the spunky gal editor of Minneapolis' way-cool Cake zine at my side, we started out (after the obligatory walking tour of the East Village, complete with stops at See Hear, Sounds, and Little Ricky's) at the Pool Bar. Actually we just ducked in there to rest our aching feet a big, and got to watch about fifteen minutes of Dreams Made Flesh. Tuneless, awkward, and without a clue, these mooks set the reputation of Boston bands back a good ten years. Yuck. Trudging every onward, I hiked down to the Wetlands just in time to catch Titanic Love Affair, one of the many hip new bands coming out of Champaign Illinois (along with Poster Children and

Smashing Pumpkins). Although I liked their CD on Charisma, live they didn't have much going besides the lead singers uncanny ability to mimic Paul Westerberg. There are enough replacement Replacements around already, thank you.

Hiked back up to the Pool Bar, where I thought I'd be seein Seka, winner of the Boston Rumble and a pretty cool metal/punk band. But they had cancelled and were replaced by another Boston group called Sexploitation. I'm not sure what they were trying to do, and I don't think the band knew either; typical young funk weenies on drums, bass and guitar (shirtless pretty boys with long hair, slap bass, and one-chord funk riffs) and a garishly overdressed and powerfully homely front dude wearing a dress. I wonder if they actually draw in Boston?

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

Come, Sprawl, and Teenage Fan Club at Maxwells

The best night of the CMJ thing and maybe the best night of the year for me. I had never heard of Austin's Come, but I immediately recognized their singer - Thalia Zadek, late of NYC's Live Skull. Often described as a post-punk Patti Smith, Thalia hasn't lost any of her intensity; she's picked up a band of baby-faced Austin punk rock dudes who back her up admirably, finding that same forceful searing groove as Live Skull but with a bit more melody and harmony. Next up were Sprawl, from Cleveland, an all-gal band who rocked the place. Not with that bitchy ballsy swagger you get from the chicks with

dicks bands like Lunachicks and L7, but with tight, seamless rock n' roll riffs, energetic vocals, and a killer backbeat. Yeah.

Next up were Teenage Fan Club, back from Scotland with a hot shit record deal from Geffen after just one (impressive) lp on Matador. But these guys proved they deserved it. Lots of lovably goofy Limey fooling around, most of it unintelligible behind those thick Scottish burrs, and great tunes that seems equally informed by huge doses of vintage punk rock and gobs of gooey Alex Chilton/Big Star pop. They hit a nice comfortable niche between the frenetic high-energy punk of Ned's Atomic Dustbin and the dreamy, psychedelic mush of bands like Blur and Rise.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16

Our American Cousin at CBGB, then Stickman and Real at The Spiral

One of those double-header nights where the timing worked out just right. 8:30 pm I'm at CBGB to catch Our American Cousin, who lucked onto a monster bill which would headline the Sweet Lizard Illtet and Debbie Harry's new band, Dirty Harry. Of course, they wouldn't be on till much later, but there's still a sizable crowd here at 8:30, a nice sign that OAC is actually building up a following. And well they should, they've got great pop tunes, ample coolness, all kinds of looks (cute singer, cool guitarist, hot chick bassist), a couple of good 7-inches out. So why are they going on first? CBGB's famed perversity rears its ugly head again when the Cousins are followed by Crispy Brown, a horribly talentless funk-weenie band who felt obliged to take all their shirts off before they started. Note to the singer dude: eat a salad.

About half of a Crispy Brown set was five songs too many so I hiked over to The Spiral, that livingroom-sized venue off Avenue A where you can always count on things to run late. Sure enough, Stickman doesn't go on until 11:40 and then plays an hour set. Nice crowd, which doesn't mean much here; twenty people fill the place up. But it's really crowded, not bad for two unknown bands in a club that doesn't advertise.

Stickman play that sort of generic college-radio rock that's about equal parts Husker Du and Descendents (on their demo, it sounds more like Husker Du/U2, chalk that up to the production, I guess). Singer Ralph Malanga has a good voice, maybe too good for a punk band, esp. since he writes lots of big monster looks that let him show off those vocal cords.

Real features Bill of American Standard on vocals, Danny (ex-Supertouch, now Crashwagon) on drums, and a bunch of mooks from NYU. This stuff is a lot heavier than I thought, almost Melvins-like in its intensity - two guitars pounding out big sledgehammer riffs while the rhythm section drills holes through your skull like a sonic jackhammer. Cool shit. Damn show ran way too late, though. Yawn....

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Girls Against Boys, Shudder To Think at Maxwells

Girls Against Boys features three ex-members of Soulside, longtime D.C. scenester Eli Janney, and two or three other people. There was a mob onstage, that's for sure - two guitars, bass, drums, keyboards, and Eli just on vocals (kinda like Guy's role in the early days of Fugazi). They started out great -- a thick, droning but danceable onslaught of guitars and keybs, kinda like the sound Bowie got on "Heroes," if you want a rough idea. But they didn't sustain it; after two or three songs, they went minimalist, that foot-thick wall of noise reduced to slap bass and artsy guitar riffs, Dylan-does-D.C. monotone vocals whining over generic white-funk beats, and pointless Nation Of Ulysses-styled trumpet blats. It was the kind of funk that has no relation to any kind of black music - just a postmodern concept in the hands of white kids who got tired of playing hardcore. Kinda reminded me of Maggie's Dream, which is a pretty sad commentary considering where this band was coming from.

I don't have anything to say about Shudder To Think except that everytime that singer reaches for the high notes with that awful operatic falsetto of his, I have to reach for the aspirin.



COME

Photo by Jim Testa

Cop Shoot Cop were convinced that EMF's audience would hate them (the two bands share management, in case you were wondering how CSC got on the bill) and came out ready to be heckled and booed by roomful of empty-headed teenyboppers. That didn't happen, partially because the sort of teenyboppers that EMF attracts are too cool for that sort of shit, and partly because the kids who dig stuff like Carter USM aren't all that far removed from Cop Shoot Cops' noise-as-rhythm Lower East Side grungecore anyway. Once they realized that the kiddies weren't going to challenge them, all the fight seemed to go out of the band. And since they couldn't get loud enough in a barn like Roseland to do any real decibel damage, that sense of claustrophobic menace they create in a space like CBGB or Maxwells didn't materialize. Without it, Cop Shoot Cop sounds like just another cut-rate Sonic Youth.

Carter The Unstoppable Sex Machine consists of two guys on guitars and vocals, with mammoth drums, bass, and synthesizers playing behind them on a tape. (Excuse me, but hasn't Ween been doing that for six years now?) That disqualifies them immediately for the title of "greatest fucking rock and roll band in the world," which is how Mr. Carter et al repeatedly referred to the act. Sorry, boys, rock and roll bands have real drummers. Anyway, with a light show that came closer to live fireworks than anything I'd ever thought I'd see inside a building, the first song proved a dazzling post-psychadelic mindfuck, rock 'n roll and hip-hop and technology all gang banging the senses. But after the first song, it all got very tired, very quickly.

The Carter USM shirts on sale in the lobby - which a lot of kids were wearing by evening's end - said "30 Something" on the front, which I thought was a reference to the band's album. It turned out that it meant the price; the damn things were going for \$32.

Time out for an editorial: I don't care how popular your band is, selling thirty-two dollar shirts to kids at shows is almost as reprehensible as selling them smack in schoolyards. Thank you.

I've reviewed EMF before so there's no need to do it again. They played exactly the same 45 minute set as on their first two visits to New York, then the same three encores. For Christ sakes, change the friggin' backing tape you play along with and get a few new songs in the set already, ok?

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27

Ugly Kid Joe at Cat Club

It takes a lot to get me out on a Wednesday night these days, even moreso to get me to the Cat Club. But there was something about Ugly Kid Joe that told me I should see them now. After watching their set, I'm convinced I was right. They're not the future of rock n roll or anything like that, but I would bet serious money that they won't be playing Wednesday night shows at small clubs much longer either.

There are too many bands nowadays doing the white funk thing mixed with rock n roll, but I will go on record here as saying that these SoCal college boys are the first band I've heard who seem to do it right. The rock songs sound like Motley Crue, snotty and funny and full of killer hooks, while the funk songs cook without lapsing into tuneless one-chord riffs. And lord, is this band made for MTV! The singer is a dead ringer for Mike Patton, while the two guitar players could give cute lessons to the Nelson brothers.

More importantly, the whole band can play. Funk bands start with the rhythm section, and these guys have a drummer who isn't very flashy or innovative, but who didn't hit one wrong beat or cymbal crash all night. The guy is just THERE, all the time, doing exactly what the songs need. Presumably once they stop playing all their

shows in front of rabid local fans and tour a bit more, they'll knock off the stupid horseplay in between songs and work up some better stage shtick. Then all they'll need is a major label deal and a video budget, and watch out.

Note to consumers: These guys played 75 minutes with a \$6 cover, thirty minutes longer than EMF played at the \$15.50 show the night before.

NEW YEARS EVE

Mummies, Mudhoney, Lyres at Maxwells

I usually wouldn't review a New Year's Eve show since these things tend to be more event than performance, but since I stayed sober enough to remember the whole evening and since it fucking rocked, I thought I would give it a go. Johnny Puke and his Sancho Panza, Dave Sapp, along with performance poetess Margaret Petrov came over to Chez Testa for some of my famous fettuccine and a few aperitifs; well-stoked, we headed down to Hoboken nice and early, rubbing elbows with some of the celebs in attendance and getting a front row spot for the Mummies.



MYSTERY PHOTO! We saw this band during the CMJ Music Marathon at the Pool Bar. Be the first to identify the band and you'll win a copy of our Jersey Beat Video Fanzine Vol. I. Hint: they're from the South.

These San Franciscan nutcases dress in mummy rags and play the kind of screamin' psycho cave stompin' 6T's garage rock that I haven't heard since the Dive closed its doors back in '87 and New York's big Sixties Revival died a painful death (to be replaced, as I recall, by the invasion of the R.E.M. wannabes, soon followed by the Grungy Pigfucker Plague of '88, and now superseded by the Funk Weenies).

Anyway, after a totally off-the-wall goofy and fab set by these mooks (including the best in-between-song joke I heard all year, the punchline of which was "Hey hey, Hugh Hugh, get offa McCloud") we all hunkered down for Mudhoney. Several dozen semi-drunked slam-dancing assholes made life miserable for any human beings left in the room but Mudhoney (considerably drunker than most of their audience) put on the best show I've seen from these guys in years, probably since the first time they ever played Maxwells (a show at which I nearly got into a fistfight with a slandering asshole from Seattle). Slammin' through a loose and sloppy set of big hits (relatively speaking) like "Touch Me, I'm Sick" and cool shit from their new album, these guys rocked in the New Year in fine style (although in typical Maxwell fashion, they lost track of time and we all celebrated Happy New Year twice, both times after the big ball had fallen at Times Square, at least by my watch).

The Lyres came on around 2 am and the two songs I heard sounded fine, although most everybody else was either on their way home or grumbling about how

feeble they sounded. I took to the chilly night air and walked home alone, ready to start yet another year of this shit.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 3

Acme, Freak Beans, Screeching Weasel, and Born Against, at The Unitarian Church, Annapolis MD

For my first punk rock jaunt of the New Year, I Amtrak'd down to D.C. to visit my pal Mike Harbin, whom I hadn't seen since he had embarked on a four-month long national tour with Arkansas' Trusty last July. On Friday night, with Mike showing early symptoms of a horrible case of flu, we drove to Annapolis for what promised to be (and was) an amazingly cool bill of punk rock. Annapolis' Acme seemed to impress the crowd, although I found their basic hardcore attack merely pro forma. Freak Beans, a band I've been admiring for over a year now, did not disappoint, however, turning in yet another psychotic performance with their unique brand of tumultuous guitar and drum clatter providing the soundtrack to singer Scott Carter's maniacal, gymnastic performance on lead vocals.

Screeching Weasel, at the tail end of their first East Coast tour in quite a few years, turned in a great set, with their newly-acquired Ramones influence at full volume. Lots of chunky powerchords and ba-ba-ba backup harmonies, with Ben Weasel in fine form on lead vocals.

With Mike's temperature spiking at 103, we could only stay for two songs by Born Against, who seemed a lot more subdued and sounded a lot more like any other hardcore/rock band here than they usually do back at ABC No Rio. We got back to D.C. and I dosed Harbin with Nyquil (after convincing Mr. StraightEdge there wasn't any alcohol in it, he apparently confusing it with Geritol), then caught the train back to NYC in the morning.



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SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

Screeching Weasel and a bunch of other bands, ABC No Rio

Normally I try to pay as much attention as possible to the opening bands on a bill, but I was so happy to see the Weasel guys and did so much shmoozing that I really couldn't give you any sort of honest review of the show. Screeching Weasel played pretty much the same set as the night before, lots of stuff from the "Hi Mom" lp and a few oldies ("Murder At The Brady House," "I Wanna Be A Homosexual") until finally climaxing with "I Want To Be Naked," for which Mr Ben Weasel dropped his pants to his ankles and wiggled his weenie for the amusement of the audience. Well, enough small talk. If Ben ever gets arrested for indecent exposure at one of these shows, at least now I know he'll never get convicted. Insufficient evidence. And it'll never stand up in court.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7

Native Tongue, False Prophets, SNFU at CBGB

Not much gets me out on Tuesday nights anymore, but the promise of Canada's SNFU - not seen in these parts for something like six years - was more than enough incentive. Native Tongue started things off with a folkie set (a couple acoustic guitars, two or three singers, no drums) that was so laid back, it was sort of difficult to focus on the fact that there was a band playing. Good background music though, and lots of good conversation, plenty of celebs in the crowd (Bill from Blackout Records being confronted by three angry gobs from Agnostic Front outside the club was worth the price of admission all by itself).

If SNFU hadn't been around for six years, it had been almost that long since I'd seen NY's own False Prophets too. The band still revolves around lead singer Stephan leipi and has grown into a sort of performance-art showcase for his songs, with costumes, props and choreography to help things along. leipi later told me that these were all new pieces, although the opening vignette - an anti-war thing with a lots of gas masks, skulls, a funk beat and a clever bit where leipi's rifle turns into the nozzle of a gas pump - almost certainly dates back to January, 1991, when it would have been a lot more cutting edge than in January, 1992.

Once you suspend disbelief and accept the show on its own terms, the Prophets put on quite a show, although there is that nagging sense of Jello Biafra Syndrome (preaching to the converted, they call it). With that in mind, the most daring and inventive piece managed to somehow combine Jesse Helms, the PMRC and cigarette cancer into one enormous Southern White conspiracy (telling the chain-smoking CBGB's audience about the evils of the tobacco industry is NOT preaching to the converted, I am happy to note).

Finally it was time SNFU, featuring Chi Pig, the most energetic, acrobatic and commanding lead singer in North America. While the music sometimes veered dangerously close to metal, the band retained a rugged hardcore edge and Chi Pig's ferocious stage moves and energy jammed it down a rapt audience's throat. Colossal.



Meeting of the minds? Ben Weasel & Johnny Puke at ABC No Rio

Photo by Jim Testa

This Isn't Me, lp
Workshed/Cargo

I never really liked Dan O'Mahoney's previous band, No For An Answer, but 411's debut lp is not to be missed. This is, in my opinion, one of the most important hardcore records to come out of the scene in the past 2 or 3 years. Lyrics address the usual - corruption, religious fanaticism, homophobia, hypocrisy, etc - but it's all written so well and arranged so originally that it holds your attention throughout. Highlights include "Face The Flag," an amazingly powerful and politically accurate account of patriotism and mob mentality, and "Those Homophobic" (previously released on a 7"), which condemns the Church's anti-gay stance. This Isn't Me packs a good punch, with its crisp, crunchy production, although vocals are too loud and could be a bit more melodic. Excellent overall. Grab this one.

- John Lisa

ACTION SWINGERS
Action Swingers, CD
Primo Scree/Caroline

If I told you that this version of the Action Swingers boasts Bob Bert (ex-Sonic Youth, Pussy Galore) on drums, Julia Cafritz (ex-Pussy Galore) on guitar, and head Singer Ned Hayden on vocals, you'd probably imagine a much better record in your head than you'll find on this CD. Maybe if somebody teaches Ned a few more riffs so he doesn't have to keep recycling the same few over and over, this'd have the kick I expected. As it is, it's more Vanilla Fudge than New York Dolls, and that's too bad.

- Jim T.

THE A.G.'S
Circus Bezerkus, LP
Forefront

Berkeley is not the only scene in the U.S. with great pop/punk bands, not as long as the East Coast has The A.G.'s to brag about. These snotty punkers from G.G. Allin country have finally managed to get an entire lp of their snarling, speedy power-pop hardcore out thanks to NJ's Forefront label and it's well worth the wait. Whether they're celebrating the joys of teenage spuddom ("Team Sixteen," "Pirate's Cove Sucks"), sucking whipped cream out of a can ("Whippets") or trying to figure out girls (all the other songs), there's catchy melodies and warp speed drums and a bratty, insinuating vocal that's part Green Day and part Dennis The Menace racing the guitars to the finish. Inspirational verse: "And though it rots/it's all we've got/which isn't much."

- Jim T.

AGENT ORANGE
Real Live Sound, CD
Restless

I loved Agent Orange since the day they were born. There I was, a 15-yr old skaterock rebel with my box blasting out my fave tunes, like "Bloodstains" and "Everything Turns Grey." Well, that image was shattered with one look at the latest photos on the inside of this CD. They look more like Faster Pussycat or L.A. Guns than the Agent Orange I remember.

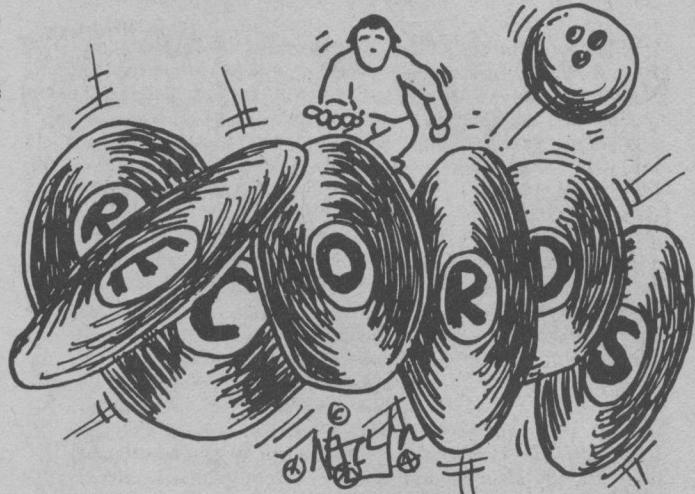
Mike Palm's unmistakable guitar and vocal sound reign supreme on this disc. Picture Mike with long Bon Jovi hair - I kid you not! Out are longtime members James and Scott, replaced by metal-looking bassist Brent Liles and Derek O'Brien on drums.

Now, as for the songs... A good mix for the retrospective live greatest hits thing. The sound quality is great, almost too good to be true, but then producer Thom Panuzio throws in tons of cheesey loud crowd noise, almost like Cheap Trick At Budokhan, to kill it.

Most of the songs sound refreshingly alive and energetic, with the exception of "Bloodstains," which sounds so tired and contrived I almost cried.

I recommend this for all Agent Orange fans. It's a great way to catch up with one of the greatest West Coast punk bands. Just block out the cheesey photos, drum solo, and crowd noise.

- Frank P.



ANTISEEN
Southern Hostility, lp
Rave

The newest Rave Records catalog says that this lp was recorded on 24 tracks, but it sounds more like 4 tracks to me. That's okay, somehow I don't think I'd like Antiseen if they'd gone for the high-tech thing. These guys have been around for ages playing distorto/trash nihilist punk with ferocious, growly, grisly bear vocals. Southern Hostility is no different. Many of the band's recent singles are included on this collection, which is a treat if you missed out on those limited pressing editions.

Some may consider Antiseen's primitive, backwards, senseless lyrics, music, and stage show counter-productive to the punk scene, but that's only if you take them seriously. This is more for fans of G.G. Allin and the Dwarves. I like it.

- John L.

ARMED FORCES
Take On The Nation, CD
Bizarre/Straight

Oh no! Who let these long-haired California jokers get ahold of the unrevised version of "How To Be A Heavy Metal Rock Star In 12 Easy Lessons"? Each song on this disc is an unrelenting barrage of every conceivable commercial metal cliche you could never wanna hear. Simply terrible!

- Alan B.

ATATISTIC
Vanishing Point, lp
Profane Existence, Box 8722, Minneapolis MN 55408

This kinda stuff really peaked in about 1987 - super-fast metal-tinged hardcore with superduper political lyrics. Profane Existence dug up these dinosaur Brits for the masses and the result is a boring mess. You already know what the way fast, screaming vocals sound like. I think what bothers me the most about these types of bands is that they wanna play really fast, but they aren't musically capable; so what happens is the

guitarist is one beat behind the drummer who's two beats behind the bass player and the singer just kinda randomly screams hardcore cliches. I guess you could make the argument that punk isn't supposed to be tight & clean, but I don't think it's supposed to be this cruddy either. It's dedicate to "all those who have no idea why we play like this." Thanks for the mention, fellas.

- Ben W.



The A.G.'s

ATOM SEED

Get In Line, CD

Mercury

Ooh! Too macho! Four mane-shakin' burnouts from London bust out with the toughest metal-funk since Mindfunk first defined it for bad boys everywhere. This is actually pretty good, though, with about half the songs being in the speedy funk realm, and the rest closer to melodic metal. All brainwashing aside, however, side two of this puppy burns hard, and is highly recommended by yours truly to anyone partial to quick, catchy funk.

- Danny Jr.

BRIAN BELLEW & THE LODI HOMEBOYS

Love And Fear, CD

Mosquito, 1217 Park Ave, Hoboken NJ 07030

Jersey bar band rock that jumps all over the pop charts looking for an identity -- a little Tom Petty, a little rockabilly, a little Bon Jovi, and not much originality. Pass.

- Jim T.

BLACK MARKET BABY

Baby Takes, German import CD

Bitzcore, Reeperbahn 63, D200 Hamburg 36, Germany

Although I've never heard of them before, it seems that Black Market Baby were pretty big in the D.C. scene in the early 80's and, judging by this 23-song CD, it's easy to hear why. These guys play supercharged punk that borders on hardcore, but always with loads of hooks and great melodies.

Their songs are almost all really political, which I can usually do without, but like the Clash and Stiff Little Fingers, their songs are so intense and powerful that I'll happily make an exception. I wish I could've seen these guys play out live.

- The Platterpuss

BRICK LAYER CAKE

"Call It A Day," 12" EP

Touch & Go, PO Box 25520, Chicago IL 60625

Brick Layer Cake is primarily some guy, Todd Trainer, who was in bands I've heard of but never actually heard (including Rifle Sport and Breaking Circus). Todd lays down trance-inducing songs that usually only contain a simple guitar riff and his talking/singing. Occasionally there's drums and a lead guitar. Now and then, the length of the songs got to me, but I thought this was pretty good - kind of moody and mesmerizing, and cool to listen to when the lights were out or I just wanted to day dream.

- Tom A.

BULLET LAVOLTA

Swandive, CD

RCA

More in a hard rock vein but all is not lost; even if it's on a major. There's an intended intensity behind this that speaks of a hard and disgruntled life (common among us fanzine writers), wherein lies its appeal. Minus a few irritating heavymetal guitar riffs and screams, it's fairly decent.

- Tom B.

CARNIVAL OF SHAME

Tortured, CD

Burnin' Records, Box 15909, Philadelphia PA 19103

Good, foot-stompin' rock and roll you might find in some obscure bar in the middle of nowhere. It reminds me of Danzig and The Cult or something. The band took their time and it shows in the production, graphics, and the cool little poster that comes inside the CD case. With comical lyrics like, "If you want to ride my highway, baby, you better pay the toll," and "You took my hi-fit and gave it to another guy," you know it's a lotta fun, and probably a good live experience.

The band also released a novelty single for the holidays called "Alcoholidays," with such timeless classics as "White Christmas," "Snoopy's Christmas," and "The Grinch." The singer's deep and evil voice makes this fun.

- Tom A.

CLOCKHAMMER

"Carrot," EP

First Warning

This trio can play some pretty thunderous metal riffs, but overall, the four songs on "Carrot" are unimpressive. The best, and simplest, cut is their cover of Joy Division's "Shadowplay." The other songs all get bogged down by complicated parts that sound forced. They get too caught up in showing everybody how well they can play instead of trying to write good songs. Not recommended.

- Dan L.

THE BUD COLLINS TRIO

In the Land Of No, CD

PO Box 120, Storrs CT 06268

The first joke is that the Bud Collins Trio is a quintet. The second joke is that none of them are named Bud Collins. The third joke, I guess, is the music, which is Steely Dan-ish jazz-rock with awkwardly out-of-key vocals. Unlistenable by any standards. And that's no joke.

- Jim T.

CRAMPS

Look Mom, No Head, CD

Restless

Can't help but feel that heartless Father Time has passed these giddy transvestite punx behind. It seems that in these days of sin, sex, and sonic savagery, songs about cross-dressing to a Buddy Holly punk'n'roll beat just ain't what they used to be. These folks ain't changed much since their (sort of) glory days, which is either a good thing or not, depending on your point of view. Gotta admit, though, they do kinda evoke fond, youthful memories of those good ol' days of slammin', gobbin', and many a midnight spent at the "Rocky Horror Picture Show."

- Alan B.

CRINGER

I Take Me Desires For Reality..., import lp

Full Circle, 12 Bell St, Newsome Huddersfield UK HD4 6NN

This was released to go hand & hand with Berkeley-based Cringer's European tour and is a compilation of various singles and their debut album. Since they've been racking out release after release, you probably have an idea of what they're about. Melodious pop-core with some twists and turns, speed and zest, and down to earth lyrics on living life and getting by. Kind of weird to hear "happy"-sounding music with bleak lyrics, but the smart money points to that as being a reason why this is really good shit.

- Tom A.

CRABSTICK

Stud Or Houseboy, LP

Feel Good All Over

Kind of silly, demented electric folk/pop. Sort of like Violent Femmes on depressants, spitting out 90 second acoustic ditties. My only complaint is the lyrics. They sound like they were meant to be funny, only they're not.

- Mike L.

CRUST

Crust, LP

Touch & Go

Things to thing on before listening to this record: 1.) Most of the band work in a state hospital, and 2.) the singer "sang" their song "Feelings" naked in an empty field for an hour. Samples, twisted & tortured vocals, pounding drums - they all add up to a very unpleasant sensation. It's sort of funny and totally insane, and definitely unique.

- Tom A.



DIVINE WEEKS

Never Get Used To It, CD

First Warning

L.A.-based and finding out about being born and unwanted and that no one's got time for a bleeding heart, all the while creating a rhythmic rock sound that doesn't grab by the balls but rather makes you stop and listen. When it comes to less aggressive music, I usually pass by most of it, but I found myself listening to this several times and got into it. Maybe it's subliminal?

- Tom B.

D.O.A.

Talk - Action = Zero, CD

Restless

I'm about to lose valuable punk points by admitting this, but this is the first time I've heard D.O.A. Recorded back in 1989, this is a greatest hits/live album and a good place to start, I guess. I especially enjoyed "Lumber Jack City" and "Let's Wreck The Party." Superb sound quality.

- Mike L.

DRAMARAMA

Vinyl, CD

Chameleon

They called this album "Vinyl" knowing full well it was only coming out on CD and cassette, which sort of clues you in on their sense of humor. That wit follows them on almost every cut here - these guys really do write excellent lyrics - while the music evokes an era they go out of their way to diss (in the song "Classic Rot"), namely the early 70's, when pop eccentrics like Harry Nilsson, Mott The Hoople, and Todd Rundgren could actually ride this sort of semi-acoustic rock onto the charts. If these guys (originally from Jersey, now residing in L.A.) are destined to remain semi-popular, at least they're doing a good job of it.

- Jim T.

DROP HAMMER

Mind And Body, CD

Red Decibels

I'm not really a fan of HEAVY METAL, and Drop Hammer are definitely HEAVY METAL. Not heavy metal, mind you, but HEAVY METAL. From the deranged scream that greets you as you hit your Play button to the last cymbal crash of the last cut, Drop Hammer provide a non-stop blast of nitro-charged HEAVY METAL. Heart patients could inject this stuff instead of adrenaline. If you like it loud, fast, hard, and totally fuckin' gonzo HEAVY, give these mooks a try.

- Jim T.

DROP ACID

Making God Smile, CD

Restless

Kevin Seconds on acid? What IS the world coming to? But I've got news for you -- if this is Kevin's idea of hallucinogenic techno-rock, the "acid" he's taking must be citric. Wimpy production makes this sound just like another 7 Seconds record.

- Jim T.

DRUNKEN BOAT

Happiness, CD

First Warning

A 13-track CD with a very punk, homemade feel. It's just one band even though I thought it was a compilation until I

read the literature. Some rock, some thrash, some rap, some samples, some spoken word, you name it. Interesting.

- Rodney L.

EASTER MONKEYS

Splendor Of Sorrow, lp

Hit & Run, PO Box 44302, Cleveland OH 44144

The Easter Monkeys toss in some sax and some crass guitar production for a Tragic Mulatto feel, then go in a 70's underground rock-band direction and then to (I hope) a parody of gothic rock, r&b style. "My baby digs graveyards, my baby digs graves." Funny, but I'll pass.

- Tom A.

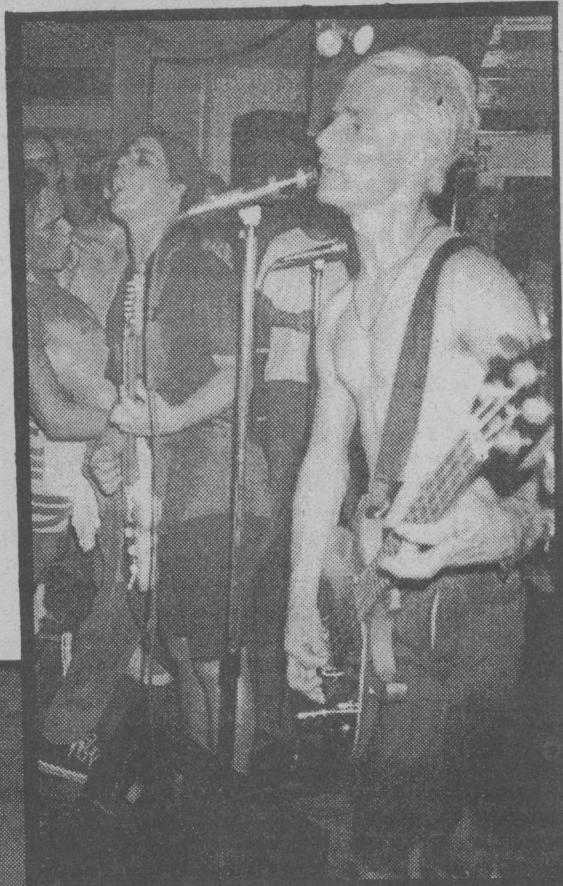
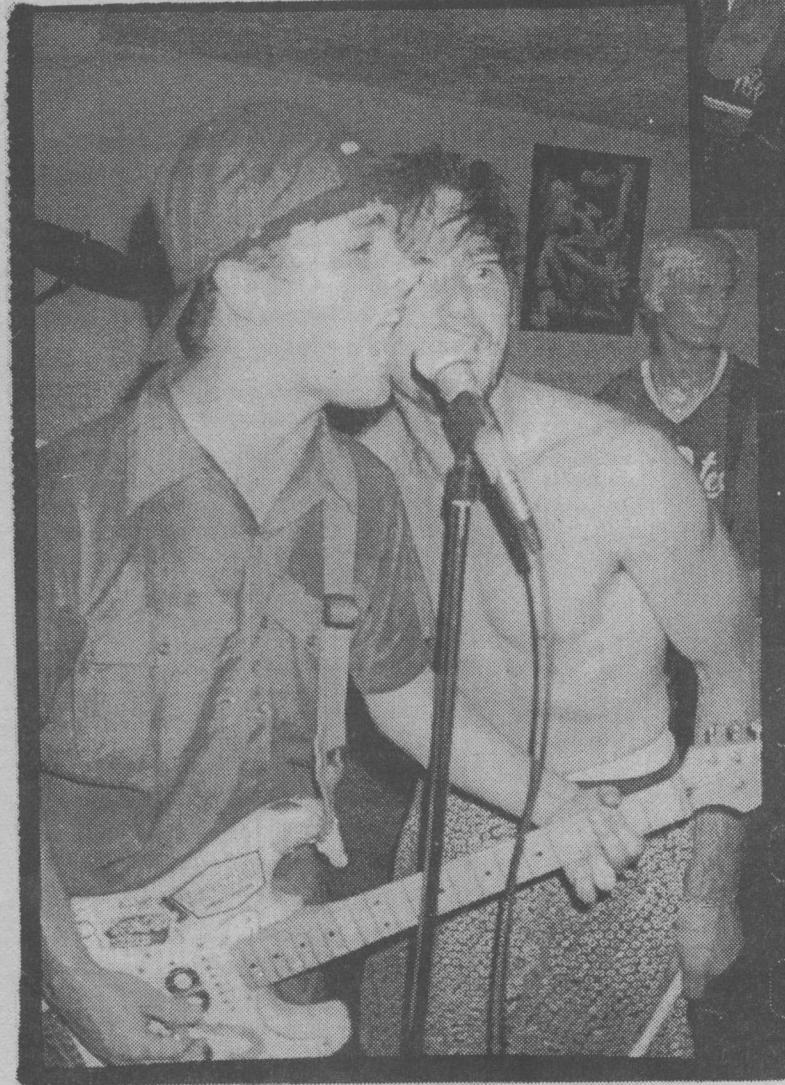
FIELD TRIP

Ripe, CD

Slash

Although this band has been around for quite a few years (this is their second lp on Slash) they sound like a bunch of horny teenagers just getting out of the garage and in front of the public for the first time. You can't fake enthusiasm and goddamn but it's infectious -- groovy simple pop tunes with a punk beat and a folk twang, a couple of cool covers (any band that does Flamin' Groovies tunes is okay by me) and one hell of a theme song. Quite okay.

- Jim T.



Green Day photos by Var/No Idea

FROGS OF WAR

All Said & Done, import lp
Full Circle

This is one of the best surprises I've had since the Snuff record a year ago. Frogs Of War's 8-song album (shitty that it's only 8 songs) shines with catchy riffs, strong harmonies, and a wall of sound. This 5-piece also delivers a jab of bitterness and the U.S. and at apathetic people, among their really good lyrics. Think of a little bit of an Oil influence mixed with some early SoCal punk, and you can imagine how good this is. Might cost a little more since it's an import, but it's worth it.

- Tom A.

FUGAZI

Steady Diet of Nothing, lp
Dischord

I thought Fugazi's Repeater album was disappointing and felt the same way about this one on the first few listens. But as I played it more, a lot more started to stand out. The drums always a solid backbone, the guitars start to get crazy - but always stay in control; and the powerful buildups to explosions are all here, like on their previous records. On songs like "Latin Roots" and "Polish," the guitars really pack a punch, and I think that's what makes this record stand apart from the last. Personal faves include "Long Division" and "KYE," and the way that Side 1 ends and Side 2 begins is clever and different. Thumbs up.

- Tom A.

GRAPES OF WRATH

These Days, CD
Capitol

These guys are a bit too hippie-ish for my tastes, and this album kinda reminds me of the first Crosby, Stills & Nash lp, or perhaps Surrealistic Pillow. As such, it makes rather pleasant background music. I don't see too many Jersey Beat readers running out and buying this, but it should do well with the Rolling Stone set.

- The Platterpuss

GREEN DAY

Kerplunk!, lp
Lookout

Green Day do a couple of things better'n anybody else right now. They write great songs -- forget about catchy, lots of bands are catchy, these guys know from hooks, from breaks, from arranging those cool bratty double-harmony vocals to best effect. They're never gonna win any awards for musicianship, but if you like cool, sloppy, infectiously poppy punk rock, you can't do any better.

- Jim T.

GRUNTRUCK

Inside Yours, cassette
Roadracer/Empty

Nothing really new here. Gruntruck runs with the same posse of grungy, heavy, blues-based Seattle metalloids that produced Soundgarden and Queensryche (and about three dozen lesser-known practitioners of the form.) On the plus side, Gruntruck's singer doesn't screech or sing in falsetto (how'd he EVER get on Road Racer?) and the band's come up with some actual melodies, a sure sign they fell into the Alternative Metal thing by way of hardcore, not heavy metal. If they get here on tour, I'll want to check them out, just in case.

- Jim T.

HALF LIFE

What's Right, LP
Get Hip

Mediocre hardcore mostly played at the "boom-PAH!-boom-PAH!" tempo. No lyrics so who knows where they're coming from? If you want a really obscure reference, how about -- they sound a lot like Inflatable Children minus the dorkiness. Decent but uninteresting.

- Mike L.

HOLE

Pretty On The Inside, CD (Caroline)
"Burn Black"/"Dicknail" 7" (Sub-Pop)

I've always been a sucker for women with guitars. I think it's a sickness. I'm an even bigger sucker for women who scream, yell, talk, sing, and moan slutty lyrics over powerful music. Hole's vocalist, Courtney Love, is no exception. Wow, does this woman feed my sickness!

I picked up Hole's Sub-Pop single this past summer. No one with a sickness like mine could deny the lust pouring out of my turntable. However, the other thing no one can deny when first hearing Hole is that Courtney Love sounds so much like Suzi, Jennifer & Donita of L7, it's hard to get over. L7 vocals or not, this 7-inch was my fave little piece of vinyl of the summer - noise, anger, sex, grunge, three chicks and a tall, scary-looking guy, just what I needed!

Then Hole, Round 2. I saw them at CBGB. Truly a fine performance from any gender. Jill and Caroline pounded out a powerful, hypnotic grunge rhythm section while Eric held it together with a guitar sound only a mother could love. Courtney had the audience by the balls in all her Nancy Spungen, strung-out, slutty barefooted glory. The set was way too short. I begged for more, to no avail. I couldn't wait for the release of their full-length lp on Caroline.

What a dismal disappointment! Mistake one: Kim Gordon and Don Fleming produced it. Courtney and the gang needed an identity, not a sound even more like L7. Now, mix that with Sonic Youth meets L7 meets any Shimmy-disc band from '91.

Mistake two: Do not include "Burnblack" or "Dicknail" on the release, sad because these are still the band's finest recorded moments.

Okay, how about bright spots? "Teenage Whore," "Good Sister/Bad Sister," and "Clouds" definitely show enough promise to keep my attention. I really wanted to love this CD but I've heard it all done before, better, by men and women noisemakers. Bottom line: There is a place in the world for Hole, let's hope the Hole gets deeper and bigger and wider and uglier as it grows.

- Frank Phobia



HUNGER FARM

Dogma, CD

Nemesis

Hunger Farm have had two previous, obscure 7-inches out on Nemesis that were totally great. Unfortunately, they were overlooked, seeing as how they didn't reflect the typically hard Nemesis sound. Their new lp, Dogma, crosses Green Day, Fugazi and Jane's Addiction without sounding too much like any of them. Crisp, clean and powerful production, with nice punk undertones and melodic hardcore tinges, make this great. "Motion," the opener, seems to be the instant hit, followed by "Cure For Cancer," with its heavy bass riffing and funky backbeats. I hope this release gets these guys the attention that they deserve, but it would have been cool to get a little more in the way of info/lyrics/pictures, etc with the packaging.

- John L.

INTO ANOTHER

Into Another, LP

Revelation

Featuring Richie of Underdog on vocals, Into Another is painful-to-listen-to cheese-metal poop. Only once in a while does Richie sound like he used to; otherwise, it's high-pitched, Headbangers Ball singing. Lyrics seem to fit the music - fantasyland interwoven with cryptic mumbo jumbo. Pass it.it.

- Tom A.

LIBIDO BOYZ

OPGU, CD

Red Decibels

I've been listening to the Libido Boyz since they were toddlin' teenypunks playing screechy hardcore in the hinterlands of Minnesota. They're all a little chunkier now and so is their sound, a percussive, persuasive pile of punk-metal with Billy Phillips' maniacal and somewhat affected lead vocals sitting way on top of the mix. Think SNFU's Chi Pig on PCP and you get an idea. I'm glad they included "Childhood Memories," previously released as a single, with its nightmarish lyrics on a rarely discussed topic, child abuse.

- Jim T.

MONSTER MAGNET

Spine of God, CD

Primo Scree/Caroline

When I was about 17 or 18, my friends Eddie, Gary and I scored a couple of tabs of acid that apparently had been cut with a lot of speed, or perhaps even some strychnine. It made us feel cruddy and sweaty, our stomachs all knotty, our mouths tasted like we'd sucked on rusty nails and we were grinding out teeth uncontrollably the whole time. Although none of us saw monsters on the wall or anything like that, we each spent 8 hours wrapped up in our own personal hell. That was a long time ago, almost a lifetime, and although there's no way I'd ever want to repeat the experience, if I were going to, this CD would make the perfect soundtrack.

- The Platterpuss

NATION OF ULYSSES

13-Point Program To Destroy America, CD

Dischord

It's ironic that D.C.'s Nation of Ulysses talk about "soul" so much, since they sure don't have any. I guess that comes from growing up listening to Minor Threat and Wire and going to art school. Sure, some of the conceptual shtick they've come up with is brilliant (as are some of their song titles), but musically, the little twerps in Bold could have written any one of these songs once somebody played Pink Flag and Goo for

them once or twice. If NoU ever learn that trumpets and sax can be more than white-noise sound effects, and maybe if they figure out that rock and roll wasn't invented in 1981 by Ian MacKaye, they might write a song called "Hot Chocolate City" that sounds as if they've actually heard music made by a black person.

- Jim T.

NEOMORT

World Of Hurt, LP

Big Money, Box 2438 Loop Stn, Mpls MN 55402

Right away, Neomort's music brings to mind sunny afternoons in the backyard, drinking an ice tea, and watching small children being mutilated by a 12-foot scaly monster. The music is slow and dirgy and the vocals growl along like you wouldn't believe. If you're into Death Grunge, you'll love this. If not, pick it up anyway for novelty purposes. Scaaaaary.

- Mike L.



Photo by Shawn Scallen

NATION OF ULYSSES

ODDS

Neapolitan, CD

Zoo

Imagine if you will a sleep-inducing guitar line. You wake up to the sound of a voice that sings, "There was bread/now it's crumbs/inside each head/there's a piece that's small and dumb." That's how "King Of The Heap," the first song on Neapolitan, begins. Believe it or not, it gets worse.

- Dan L.

POPEALOPES
Cavalcade, CD
Skyclad

Sometimes you can tell a band's going to be bad by their name or the cover art. I know, don't judge a book by its cover, but I just sort of had a hunch with this one, y'know? These chaps from Davis, CA, string out ten songs worth of hypnotic, seedy, college art/folk masturbation that I just can't find a whole lot of good things to say about. If Galaxie 500 made you want to pull your hair out by the roots, you might want to pass on this one.

- Danny Jr.

PSYCHEFUNKAPUS
Skin, CD
Atlantic

It seems as if the super-tight West Coast funk quartet known as Psychefunkapus has fallen into that nasty black hole called "progression." SKIN is the comeback to Psychefunkapus' incredible self-titled 1990 debut, and hey, it's even produced by Jerry Harrison of the Talking Heads. But who really gives a shit? This album basically sucks. For the most part, what we have here is sleepy MTV love ballads and poppy, silly joke songs that make you want to smash your speakers instead of letting out a chuckle and dancing the hokey-pokey. This band obviously has delusions of grandeur; do yourself a favor and steal their first record instead.

- Danny Jr.

PULNOC
City Of Hysteria, CD
Arista

Pulnoc (pronounced Pull-Notes, means "midnight" in Czech) is only three years old at present, yet their history stretches all the way back to 1968. They began as the legendary psychedelic rock group, Plastic People Of The Universe. Their story & struggle is a long, sad but proud tale; their spokesperson, Ivan Jirous, spent a decade in jail for trying to express his beliefs. The Pulnoc collective is no doubt the longest-existing "underground" band in the true sense. Against great odds, they finally recorded four LP's from '78 to '87 of their completely unique blend of Eastern European progressive/folk/rock music.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, they eventually mutated in Pulnoc, whose first offering has been released by an American major label. How times have changed!

This release, City Of Hysteria, has a powerful yet understated aura. The Plastic People's first and biggest influence was the Velvet Underground, and hence, that influence continues to pervade this CD. The sad spirit of the late Nico is apparent throughout; from the melancholy and haunting tone of female lead vocalist Michaela Nemcova, to the song dedicated to Nico, to the faithful, somber rendition of the Velvets' "All Tomorrow's Parties."

Only three of these 11 songs are sung in English; the rest are translated in an enclosed booklet. The themes are bleak, yet poetic. This music is dead serious, unlike most other pop music. The overall mood and sound is dark, droning, churning; the deliberately subtle terror of life behind the Iron Curtain of the past not easily forgotten.

Although it rocks in its own way, much of this music is slow, primal, throbbing, yet magically hypnotic. It continually pulls you into its vortex. At times, the mutant groans remind of early Hawkwind - tortured, but majestic as well. Ain't nothing like the real thing!

- Bruce Gallanter

RATTAI'L GRENADEIER
Too Much Of A Good Thing, CD
Sonic Iguana, Box 4035, Lafayette IN 47903

The second LP from Indiana's Rattail Grenadier still finds these guys treading a thin line between speedmetal and power hardcore, but thanks to Paul Mahern's poppy production, things never get TOO heavy. Lyrics alternate between blustering spoofs of hardcore macho and serious topics like politics and the environment. Rick Harris is the new singer, with a snotty teen voice in the spirit of Zero Boys' Paul Mahern. Tons of power riffs from Flav "Big Man" Giorgini make this sucker roar like a 18-wheeler falling off a bridge.

- Jim T.

RICHIES
Spring Surprise, German import LP
We Bite (see back cover)

The Ramones were (repeat, WERE) a great band. You know that. The first three albums and the "It's Alive" double set contained music that propelled my life (and many others) in the directions we chose. I tell ya, though, my favorite thing about the Ramones - beyond the swell silliness, the three-chord covers, and the simplicity of their bubblegum-inspired grind - was that they tackled some pretty gritty subject matter. Like, "53rd & Third" was about male hustling, and "You're Gonna Kill That Girl" described a murder. That, to me, is what gave the Ramones their weight.

Now we have the Richies from Germany. They want to be the Ramones so bad that they must ache. It shows from their leather jackets to the "Rocket To Russia"-styled inner sleeve. What they lack is that weight. You get three songs about motorcycles, a tune lamenting the breakup of the Bangles, and paeans to missing girls. You also get "God Take Me Out Of This Life," which has the lyric, "God take me out of this life/I can't live with East Germans/side by side." It really says that. All of this is delivered in a light and fluffy Ramones-like attack that has no charm at all. I don't like this record, it's derivative and uninspired. In fact, I've already given it far more attention than it deserves.

- Des Jr.

SANITY ASSASSINS, LP
Full Circle

Well, I thought that Connecticut's Sanity Assassins' song on the "If It's Too Loud" compilation was pretty bad, but this record, like Full Circle's other new releases, it a quality product. Each song is combustible, launching into noise-ridden jams, then back into the already-rough framework, just to go off again. Really catchy stuff, with some effect on the guitar that's fucked up, not to mention the bass (but I just did) on the song "10 A.M." Good.

- Tom A.

SCHERZO
Suffering & Joy, LP
Lookout

Scherzo manages to have both guitars and bass play off one another and create some noteworthy, melodious pop/punk without the bubblegum. Sometimes I felt that the vocals were the weakest part, holding the songs back, but otherwise this is another fine Lookout release.

- Tom A.

HEAVY LIKE A SACK OF WET SHIT

by John Lisa

MELVINS - "Eggnog" 10" and "The Melvins" CD (Boner)
EYEHATEGOD - "In The Name Of Suffering" LP (Revolver)
EARTH - "Extra-Capsular Extraction" CD Single (Sub-Pop)

The Melvins were the first to try and outdo Black Sabbath, who weren't trying to outdo anybody, just do their own thing. Just in case you're still in the dark, the Melvins play painfully slow grunge-metal with loud-as-fuck bass and uncompromising rhythms. Unlike other, bigger bands which have emerged from their scene, the Melvins do NOT rock. With each release, they go deeper into the underground, getting progressively more noisy and inaccessible. Good for them! "Eggnog" is an earful of pain and misery. Most of the time, there's not even a melody, which is another plus. They've never sold out. They haven't signed with a major. They're still annoying, repetitious, hateful, screeching, gloom and doom hard as fuck shit and that's all you need to know. Definitely recommended.

Eyehategod's debut release is in the tradition of the Melvins but has a more gritty texture. Still painfully slow with an occasional blast of speed, the vocals are a lot more distorted. Vague and vomitous, angst-driven lyrics of love, death, sex, confusion, pain and God. Although a great amount of this material blatantly bites of the Melvins, I can't help but get a head rush from this one, due to the fact that it's done with flair and creativity.

Since Sub-Pop can't have the Melvins, they try and get away with releasing total crap like Earth. Three ten-minute songs on a CD, much slower and filthier than the two aforementioned bands, end up a total bore to say the very least. It's sleazy and typical of Sub-Pop to try and cash in on this sound. Fuck that! Even if you do like the Melvins and other bands of this genre, you'll hate this garbage.

VOIVOID - Angel Rat LP (MCA)

This is VoiVod? Well, it's a hell of a lot different from their first few records. At this point, classifying VoiVod as a metal band would be totally ridiculous. The guitars are way too toned down and the poppy melodies are brought

upfront. Angel Rat still has that "nuclear" sound which sets VoiVod apart from most bands in this genre. But there are quite a few tunes here that I could see appearing on primetime MTV, and it seems like VoiVod is going for the big fashion thing, which I find totally repulsive.

The most amusing aspect of this band has to be in the way their lyrics are written. Supposedly, they can't speak English very well and have to rely on a translator to turn their twisted stories into song lyrics. And when that translator herself doesn't speak English all that well, you can tell that you're in for some interesting results. Angel Rat as a whole is a really good album. The music is interesting, fresh, and upbeat, and Dennis Belanger's vocals are precise and well-defined. But it's all too evident that VV are going for the big bucks this time around.

SCRAWL

Bloodsucker, CD

Feel Good All Over, Box 148428, Chicago IL 60614

Three smart women out of Columbus, OH, where good bands come from. Female but not exactly feminine, pissed off but not angry, rockin' but not metal, sort of like Salem 66 except the gals in Scrawl can harmonize and stay in the same key. Two covers and five originals. Survivors of the Rough Trade cataclysm. Great live show. Need more? Listen.

- Jim T.

SCREECHING WEASEL

Hi, Mom, CD

Lookout

I usually try not to review my friends' records, and Ben Weasel is a friend of mine, but this one was just too good to pass along to anybody else. Higher quality production and a slightly revised lineup clean up all the noisy mistakes that made the Weasels' first two records too punk for their own good. This time around, they've got just enough production to make every hook, snarl, stomp, whistle, buzz and ba-ba-ba backup harmony sound just right. Someone in this band (probably all of 'em) have been listening to the Ramones an awful lot. Take "Ramones Leave Home" era three-chord punk, add Green Day-ish harmonies and big sloppy Bad Religion hooks and you get an idea. Great lyrics too. Definitely on the Top 10 list. Even if you do think Ben is a dick, you should get this record.

- Jim T.

EYEHATEGOD



SEAWEED

"Despised," 12" EP
Sub-Pop

Seaweed churn out 6 songs that stick with a style that fans of Sub Pop will be familiar with. The band shows lots of vigor and intensity with their two-guitar wall of sound and a singer who releases all his pent-up energy. Catchy, rockin' rock that will please longhairs and short hairs alike. Of the six songs, "Re-Think" was already released on their first single.

- Tom A.

SENATOR FLUX

Storyknife, CD
Emergo

The most eclectic, unpredictable, and "pop" of all Dischord alumni continue their exploration of post-modern songcraft with tunes that borrow or evoke everything from Bob Dylan to Jane's Addiction to psychedelia to the sort of cheery-on-top confection that wouldn't be out of place coming from Squeeze. It's be a lot easier for these guys if they were British instead of outcasts from hardcoreland, but this is definitely worth a listen.

- Jim T.

SHADY MEN ON A SHADY PLANET

Dim The Lights, Chill The Ham!, CD
Cargo

This one's basically a bunch of throw-away instrumentals, 23 (count 'em!) musical ditties including a lovely revised version of the Sonny & Cher masterpiece "Bang Bang" as well as the Beach Boys' "In My Room." Nothing to rave about, but it's fun to make up your own words to these songs and stand in front of the mirror and...uh...ah, rock n' roll heaven's here to stay.

- Alan B.

SITUATED CHAOS - 12" EP

Mint Tone, 161-26 Cross Bay Blvd #150, Howard Beach NY 11414

Five songs, all competently played, straight-forward hardcore (not mosh core), but not too many things stand out. The lyrics are rather good, though, except that sometimes the singer tries to fit too much into the music.

- Tom A.

SLUDGEWORTH

What's This?, CD
Johann's Face, Box 479-164, Chicago IL 60613

Although they're pretty much a secret outside their home town, Sludgeworth are one of the hottest punk bands in Chicago at the moment, with ex-Screeching Weasels Brian (drums) and Dan (vocals) leading the charge through fast, lively punk rock that jumps from catchy pop-core to throbbing funk. Sludgy production keeps this effort from the "amazing" category, but tunes like "Someday" and "Funk Dungeon" make them a band to watch in '92.

- Jim T.

CHRIS STAMEY

Fireworks, CD
RNA

Chris Stamey's first solo work since 1988's It's All Right finds the ex-dB once again working the same fertile pop soil that's always been his turf. There are love songs and whimsical topical tunes ("On The Radio," which shoulda been the single), and some heartbreakingly beautiful ballads (check out "The Brakeman's Consolation," an almost perfect

metaphor for Stamey's disappointing failure to ever find an audience beyond his small cult following...it almost had me in tears). Yeah, another brilliant pop album by one of the most underrated singer-songwriters of his generation...and at his record release party at Maxwell's for this disc, he drew 50 people. Go figure.

- Jim T.

STRETCHHEADS

Barbed Anal Exciter, 10" EP
Blast First import

Deranged, brain-slurring noise. Extremely annoying - to the point where it seems that was the intent.

- Mike L.

SUPERCHUNK

No Pocky For Kitty, CD
Matador

Less gleefully messy and chaotic than their debut lp (thanks mostly to Steve Albini's disciplined production and few guitar overdubs), but Superchunk still revel in pop havoc, with Mac's pubescent vocals leading the charge. A "cleaner" guitar sound for this band is still twice as punk rock as anybody this side of Pavement; lyrics still rule and you want hooks? You got hooks. One of my favorite albums of the year; just when I had worn out the vinyl copy I bought, Matador sent me a CD. Thanks, Gerard. Happy new year.

- Jim T.

SUPERTOUCH

The Earth Is Flat, lp
Revelation

By leaps and bounds, Supertouch improve upon their 3-song 7" with a fucking impressive, powerful and all-around great album (which, sadly, wasn't released until months after the band had broken up). Vocals, guitar, bass and drums mesh together for a potent display of their tight, rhythmic hardcore sound. There's a healthy dose of acoustic guitar throughout the record, besides the deep grooves, emotional breaks and anguished vocals and energy that set this one above other NY/HC releases.

- Tom A.

SUPERTOUCH...AND OTHER PEOPLE, Video (45 min)
c/o Eric Fennell, 3502 Kings Hwy, Bklyn NY 11234

This video was filmed and edited over a period of several years, some of it on camcorder and some of it with on movie film, later transferred to video. It combines both live footage from a variety of venues (everywhere from ABC No Rio to one of those good ol' CBGB Sunday moshathons) with up close and in depth interviews with all the band members. The editing is so professional, they could show this on PBS as is and no one would ever suspect that it was a 'punk rock' do it yourself project. My only gripe is that since it wasn't released until a good year after the band's breakup, some sort of postscript should have been added noting that Supertouch had broken up (and quite acrimoniously, at that). Still, this is the finest home video on a punk rock band I've ever seen, and if you were at all into Supertouch, you'll want a copy.

- Jim T.

SWEET CONVULSIONS

6-song EP
PO Box 9131, Newark NJ 07104

Sweet Convulsions sound like they're still looking for an identity on their debut EP; a little techno-industrial, a little punk, some pop, with a suggestion of camp and a cover of

Gloria Gaynor's disco hit "I Will Survive." Concocted by Jack Pavlik (vocals) and Joe Pla (keyboards and guitars, with everything else programmed on synths ala Pet Shop Boys), the mix is a bit thin (as compared to similar efforts by, say, Nine Inch Nails or, closer to home, New Brunswick's Crocodile Shop) and the midi programs could use a good deal of beefing up.

- Jim T.

SWERVEDRIVER

Raise, CD

A&M

If you ever wondered what Dinosaur Jr. would sound like if J Mascis was from England and could keep a band together, well...here you go.

- Jim T.

TOAD THE WET SPROCKET

Fear, CD5

Columbia

"Goddamn Lovers That Never Show Up" was a favorite of mine of a song on this release, and though this collection has some pretty vocals and harmonies, the problem is that it's just so damn boring. Any songs that might have had some kick just fall short. Yawn.

- Tom B.

TREEPEOPLE

Guilt, Regret, Embarrassment, LP

Toxic Shock

This is the coolest thing I've heard out of Seattle in eons, and the best thing put out by Toxic Shock in a while. While it might sound predictable (because they're from Seattle) to say there's forceful guitar playing with an ounce or two of grunge, this stands out high above the pack. A first-rate, diverse album that should be successful. And hey, if it can happen to Nirvana, why not?

- Tom A.

TRULY

Truly, CD5

Sub-Pop

When I first saw this CD, I thought it would be an interesting listen, since there are former members of Soundgarden and Screaming Trees involved. However, the four songs here are disappointing and downright awful. Truly proves that just loads of distortion doesn't make you the next big thing. Where loud, driving guitars and lethargic vocals have worked for groups in the past, these elements completely fall apart when this Sub-Pop foursome tries them. I understand a group's wanting to come up with new ideas - i.e., weird progressions and chord changes - in order to sound unique, but these guys just don't hack it. Every song is badly arranged and the singer sounds like he's making up the melodies as he goes along, while the guitarists rely on distortion to play their guitars for them. The only thing Truly is, is truly bad.

- Dan L.

UGLY KID JOE

Ugly As They Wanna Be, CD

Stardog/Mercury

Well, this isn't really good but it's not really bad, either. Picture a few leather jacketed, longhair bad asses jamming hard with a couple of skateboard kids and there you have it. We get a little bit of everything here, from offensive ballads to pure funk to 70s metal, complete with cool chord progressions. It's obvious they're just getting started, but with time I think this band could be very good. Definite potential. It won't be your favorite, but if you're a collector of the hard-edged funk bit, check it out.

- Danny Jr.

UNCLE TUPELO

Still Feel Gone, CD

Rockville

It's not often when production alone dooms a record, but Uncle Tupelo play these same songs so much better live than you have to blame either the producer or engineer who got this on tape. The band's slower countryish numbers come across



UNCLE TUPELO



Photo by Jim Testa

fine - think "Grievous Angel" for the '90's - but anything that's supposed to be fast and loud has guitars and drums that sound like they're wrapped in brown paper bags. Still, with 13 cuts to choose from there's enough here to grab hold to, and if this trio ever comes your way, be sure to catch the show.

- Jim T.

UNSANE
Unsane, CD
Matador

Thirty-seven minutes of viciously disturbed feedback, distorted vocals, squawk and throb. Did anyone mention change of pace? I didn't think so.

- Jim T.

VANILLA TRAINWRECK
Sofa Livin' Dramazine, CD
Mammoth

These guys embody everything I've ever hated about bands like Black Sabbath, but even more so. Picture loads of distorted guitar wanking done with no imagination whatsoever, drums thudding away at the speed of molasses flowing uphill, and angst-ridden vocals with lyrics that are to ridiculous to bother repeating, but sung with all the pomp of Wagnerian opera. Of course what all this means is that that in a year or two, these guys will probably be huge, but in the meantime, I'm gonna see if Venus Records will buy my copy of this piece of crap.

- The Platterpuss

VELVET CRUSH
In The Presence Of Greatness, CD
Ringers Lactate

"Maybe this is not the place to put my faith after all." What a great line. Jangly, guitar-driven pop, recorded at someone's house on 8 track, perhaps the way it should be. Check out the harmonies and steady tambourine beat. And while you're enjoying the music, check out the larger qualities of the nude model on the picture sleeve.

- Tom "I'm Married" B.

VENUS BEADS
Black Aspirin, CD
Emergo

Some sort of pop/garage hybrid. One short song asks the question: "Does God Shoot Dice?" Mostly tunes with a social message, in some sort of dark vein. Seems like a good band with commercial possibilities.

- Rodney L.

VIDEO SHEETMETAL VOL. II
Warner Bros./Red Decibels Video (1 hr)

The second installment of Jake Wisely's video fanzine goes way beyond what you'd expect with a title like "Video Sheetmetal." Sure there's metal but there are lots of alternative bands too, just loud ones -- Helmet, GWAR, Coffin Break, to name just a few. Great video, short and concise interviews, and this maniacal clown between the bands plays emcee.

- Jim T.

VIVIANS
Fear, lp
Hit & Run

A search that leads to a few answers inundated with memories, fear and emptiness. I'm not sure what I expected

from this Cleveland four-piece, but I was very pleased with the way the issues of a present meaningless come across. I hope everyone finds happiness sooner or later, but this disgruntled bunch puts their disillusionment forward in the best fashion since Beme Seed.

- Tom B.

WILL & THE BUSHMEN
Blunderbuss, CD
Core

Basic formula pop - equal parts Beatles and Squeeze. That doesn't sound bad, and it isn't. Just not very original or impressive. Your move.

- Jim T.

YARD TRAUMA
Lose Your Head, lp
Gift Of Life

About 7 years ago, Yard Trauma released their first 45, "Some People," one of the classic 60's garage-inspired singles of the mid-80's. With its snotty vocals and incessant Vox organ, it sounded like a long lost ? & The Mysterians record. Anyone expecting more of the same here is going to be quite surprised.

Gone are all of those early garage influences, and along with them, the keyboards. In their place is a heavier, guitar-oriented sound and, unlike the Chesterfield Kings, who have undergone a similar change and made themselves a laughing stock, these guys have survived the transition and can still kick some serious butt. Lose Your Head is consistently powerful, with some super-catchy tunes (check out "I Refuse" and "One Thousand Lies"), loads of loud guitars and crisp production. Although not everything is up to snuff, it's still worth checking out.

- The Platterpuss

HEAR NO EVIL - Compilation CD
Galt Records

If the words "power pop" mean anything at all, you will want to check out this 17 band compilation of mostly unknown new acts from the Greater New York area, all of whom keep a wad of bubblegum wedged firmly in their cheek (musically speaking). Jerry Kitzrow and The Bandables' "Levitation" is worth the price of the CD alone, while the Bandables minus Jerry and calling themselves Mystery Date turn in an equally fine tune, "Girl Behind The Curtain." And there are 15 more, almost as irresistibly catchy and loveable.

- Jim T.

THEY SHOWERED US WITH BEADS AND FLOWERS
Compilation CD

Sound Of The Sea, Box 18078, Clev.Hts, OH 44118

Usually, bands save their weakest tracks for compilations. The bands here - mostly unknowns from the Cleveland area, still recording demos - sound like they're each giving the performances of their lives. Usually, compilations with a folkie or laid back theme get wimpy and boring. This one holds your attention all the way through. And usually, the guy who runs the record label is in the weakest band on the comp. Not here. Sound Of The Sea's Alan Grandy provides two terrific songs, "Leslie's Lonely Day" from a solo demo, and "Telephone Man" by his band, Terrible Parade. Other standout cuts come from Jehova Waitresses, Odd Girl Out, and Lynn Haney & Marcia Steele. The sound of steel guitar strings and the clear, strong voices of the singer-songwriters on this comp reminded me of what latenight FM radio could be 15 years ago, a magical, peaceful oasis of words and music.

- Jim T.

BOUNCING CASKET #4 \$1.50
Lots of bands, Fiendz tour diary, reviews

CACTUS PRICK #2 \$1
1265 E University #1014, Tempe AZ 85281
Spunk, Didjits, reviews

CARRY SMYTH #6 (formerly SKIDGE) 2 stamps
76 Sapphire Ln, Franklin Pk NJ 08823
Some music but mostly a messy collage of whatever's been on editor Mike Lupica's mind

CHAIRS MISSING "Brazil Issue" \$2
PO Box 522, Stratford CT 06497
The zine that names each issue after a Wire song is back with a bunch of cool band interviews (Bewitched, Unsane, Venus Beads) and lots of babes

CRAWL OR DIE #13 \$2
PO Box 8531, Salem MA 01971
A wild look at all aspects of trash culture - zines, flicks, rock. Psychotronic zineage at its looniest.

D.A.M. #2 75 cents
8647 Cox Rd, Indianapolis IN 46241
Punk rock and skateboard pix, photocopied.

DIAL M FOR MOTHERFUCKER #2 \$2
951 Quinton Ave, Trenton NJ 08629
Messy pasteup collage of punk, porn, news clips, and reviews

EAR OF CORN #22 \$1
PO Box 2143, Stow OH 44224
Dave Schall's wacky zine goes full-sized. Punk rock intvwss and reviews

EAST COAST EXCHANGE #3 \$2
% Ethan Minsker, 184 Lexington Ave #7B, NYC 10016
Beautifully reproduced zine with lots of photos, intvwss with Funk Face, Desiderata, Senator Flux, reviews

EMILYS HIP POCKET #4 2 stamps
1475 Latson Rd, Howell MI 48843
A freewheeling look at punk rock and baseball cards. Well-written.

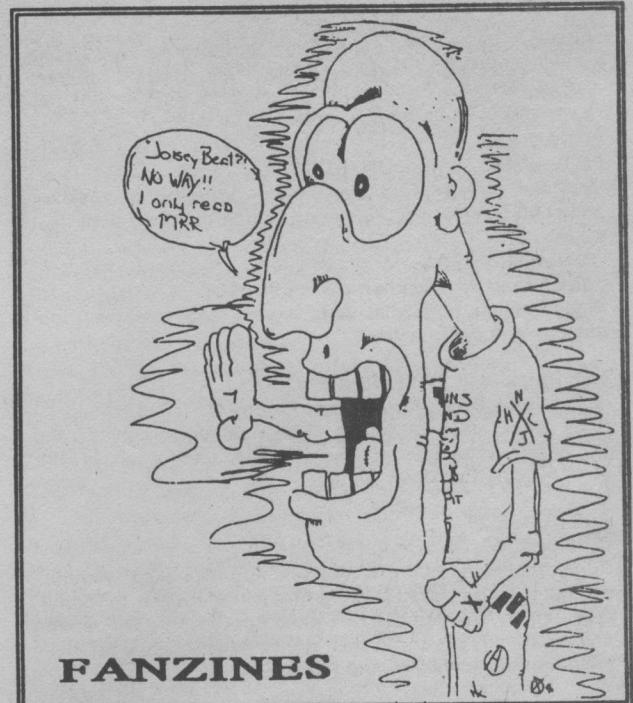
ENGAGE DISENGAGE RE-ENGAGE #5 \$2
6853 Green Meadow Cir, Louisville KY 40207
Nice looking punkzine with lots of pics

EVIL KNEEVIL'S BLADDER #1 \$1
Marty, 606 S Ardmore, Villa Park IL 60181
A long piece on apartheid breaks up coverage of the Greater Chicago punk scene with intvwss and pix.

GENETIC DISORDER #5 2 stamps
1650 Smoketree Dr, El Centro CA 92243
For a photocopied zine, this looks pretty good, with a funny tour report on a trip to Vegas and intvwss with Warlock Pinchers, Offspring, Bad Religion, and more.

GODSEND #17 \$2
Todd Zachritz, 1401 Fuquay Rd, Evansville IL 47715
A very industrial oriented issue. Intense interviews, badly photocopied photos.

HOT POOP #2 \$1
224 Whispering Hills Rd, So Plainfield NJ 07080
Born Against and Combat Stance interviews, and lots of cool photos.



FANZINES

HANLEY NEWS #5 \$1
7781 North Ave De Carlotta, Tucson AZ 85704

A little bit of this 'n that, some punk, some pics, some movies, and some essays

HUNCH ? \$1
212 Highland #22, Lansing MI 48823
Looks like somebody's got a Mac. Interviews with Loudspeaker, Jonestown, in big print.

INDECISION #2 \$1.50
Dave Mandel, 23391 Mulholland Dr #430, Woodland Hills CA 91364
Lots of great photos and intvwss with lots of punk rock bands. 52 big pages packed with cool stuff.

ITS ALIVE #9 \$1
Fred Hammer, 900 Azalea St, Oxnard CA 93030
Intvwss and photos presented in unusual layouts with cool graphics

JOHNNY ON THE SPOT #4 \$1
118 Surrey Ln, Lk Forest IL 60045
Lots of reviews and some interviews in this half sized zine

LEIGHTON LOOK #4 \$2
RR#3, Pugwash Nova Scotia BOK 1LO Canada
Rodney has a consuming passion for two things - music and wrestling - reflected in this zine. No graphics but lots of reviews

THE LIZARDS EYELID Fall '91 \$2
PO Box 8561, Jupiter FL 33468
Lots of short intvwss and unusual layouts

LOCAL ANESTHETIC #1 \$1.50
7 Georgia Ave, York SC 29745
A really good looking first issue on heavy stock, with loads of bands, some fiction, and good photos

LOOK AGAIN #4 \$2
PO Box 1090, Hudson NH 03051
Big thick issue loaded with lots of very heavy bands and a busy, British-looking layout style

NOT EVEN #3 \$2

8109 Fenway Dr, Bethesda MD 20817

Reviews, intvw, photos; Shelter and Born Against square off in dissenting interviews on this issue's theme, "religion."

ORGAN #25 \$2

PO Box 790, London UK E17 5RF

Very well done zine on glossy paper, with lots of reviews and short interviews. Heavy on British funk and punk.

OUTBACK #7 \$2

5255 Crane Rd, Melbourne FL 32904

Nice looking punkzine with intvw and reviews, incl Jawbox and Jawbreaker

THE PAUL EMIL EXPERIENCE #2 \$1

% Steffens, 33 Jefferson Ave, Kearny NJ 07032

Punk rock reviews mixed with pasteup graphics and vegetarian propaganda. The official house organ of the KPM (Kearny Punkrock Mafia).

THE PROBE #1 \$2

PO Box 5068, Pleasanton CA 94566

Computer generated graphics and lots of naked wimmin distinguish this good looking first issue. I have to admit that I really enjoyed this one once I got into it. The editor and his friends chronicle their goofy antics, heavy on male bonding, beer drinking, and hormones.

RIFT #2 \$1

Rich Horton, Box 33302, Minneapolis MN 55433

An outlet for expression - art, poems, fiction, and letters. The editor encourages mail and submissions from fans.



EDITOR'S CHOICE!

NOTHING BUT RECORD REVIEWS \$3

PO Box 137 Prince St Sta NY, NY 10012

Mykel Board rates records, videos and tapes from the underground, with lots of rare goodies acquired during his sojourn in Japan.

INSURRECTION #1 \$2

5599 Dunfries Ct, Dublin OH 43017

Whenever I see an address like Dublin OH, I'm impressed. So here's another kid from Bumfuck, USA who's put together a cool zine with good interviews and lots of great photos. Now what's your excuse?



TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING, the new album by RATTAIL GRENADIER. Features guest appearances by Bruce Stuckey (TOXIC REASONS) and Matt Marz (THE DISEASE). Production by PAUL MAHERN (ZERO BOYS, TH'INBRED, RAW POWER, SLOPPY SECONDS, etc.) and Mass Giorgini.

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Lafayette, IN 47903

SOMETHING SMELLS #5 \$2

Box 20161, Barrie Ontario Canada L4M 6H2

Man, you turn the pages and there's just one cool band after another, with some reviews at the end. Lots of photos too.

SPAZ #1 \$2

112 Duane St Box 7, NYC 10007

A mini-zine of poetry, with some photos. Editor Margaret Petrov is a performance poet herself. Issue #2 will be bigger.

SUBSTITUTION #2 \$2

664 12th St #207, San Pedro CA 90731

Sharp looking zine with industrial club music as its main focus. Eye-catching layouts.

SUBURBAN VOICE #31 \$2.50

PO Box 1605, Lynn MA 01903

Al Quint's zine takes a gander at the current state of the Boston hardcore scene, including a bonus 7-inch with some of the scene's hottest new bands. The usual literate interviews and excellent photos maintain the high standards that have made Al the zine god of New England.

UNIROD #2 \$2

4214B Filbert Ave, Atlantic City NJ 08401

Poetry, fiction and unusual artwork fill this literary-minded zine; nicely printed too.

VICIOUS HIPPIES FROM PANDA HELL #12 \$1

PO Box 34, Portland OR 97207

Copying this on colored paper compensates for the rather

plain layouts and lack of graphics. Lots of reviews and short pieces on bands.

VIRAL PRESS #1 \$2

Matt Kelly, 1411 Pacific Ave, Manhattan Beach CA 90266

I wish there were home computers back when I started Jersey Beat, then my first issue might've looked this good. This is about as serious as punk rock gets without turning into textbook prose. The layouts are gorgeous and quite professional even if the contents are totally punk. Good effort.

VISION ON #2 \$2

Steve L., 27 Springbank Croft, Holmfirth, West Yorks England HD7 1LW,

British zines always look so hip. Mostly UK punk in this one, lots of it still underground so here's a chance to find out about lots of cool bands that haven't been signed yet. Good writing too.

WAFFLE #1 \$2

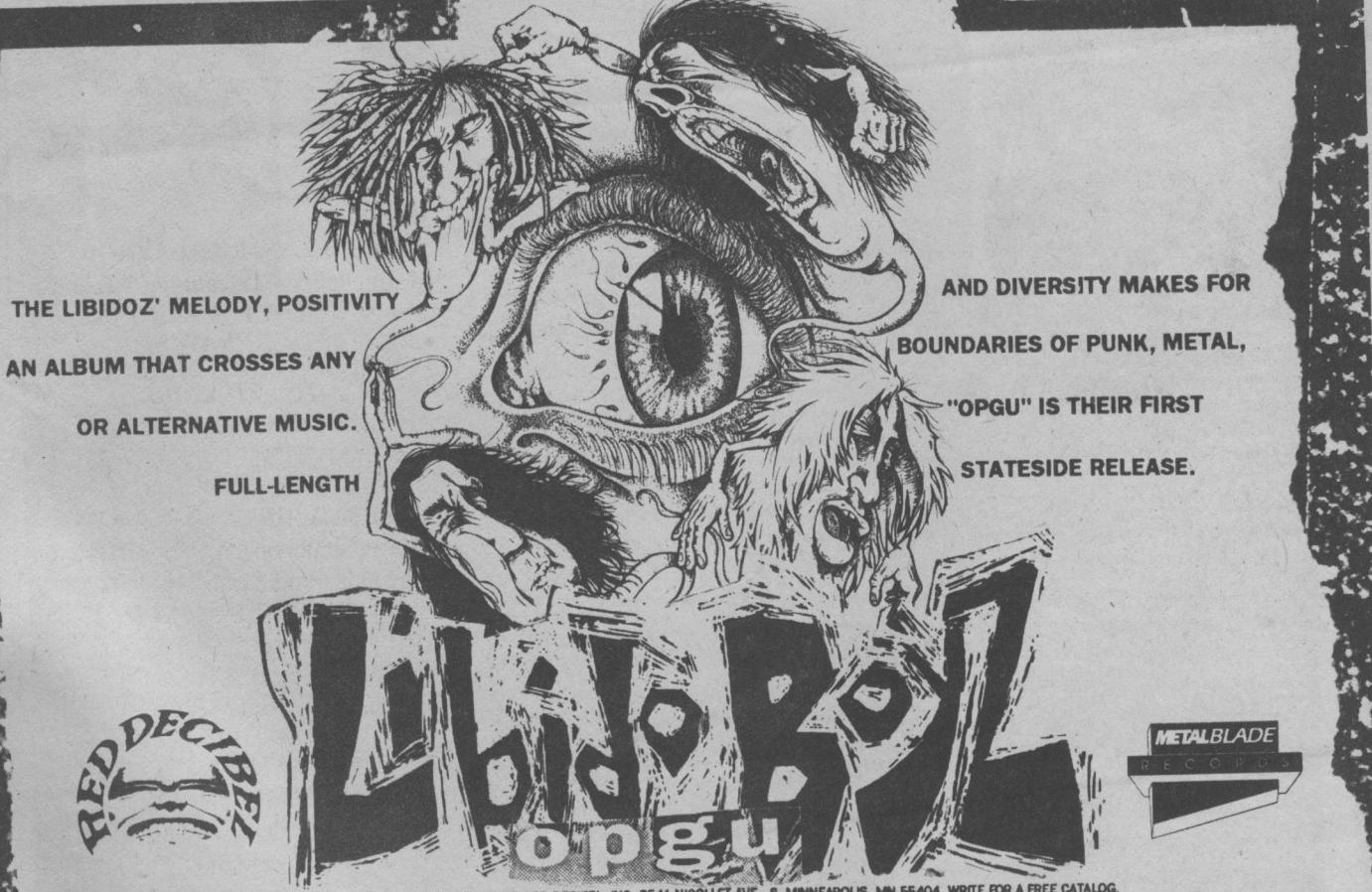
Noel Tolentino, Porter College 842, Santa Cruz CA 95064

Another impressive debut -- even colored ink! Great graphics, reviews, poetry and fiction, and an impressionistic approach to punk. Check it out.

WHO CARES #3 \$2

PO Box 1181, Bethesda MD 20827

Velocity Girl, Gray Matter, good photos, and some pages on the subject of sexuality fill this one up. Good looking zine.



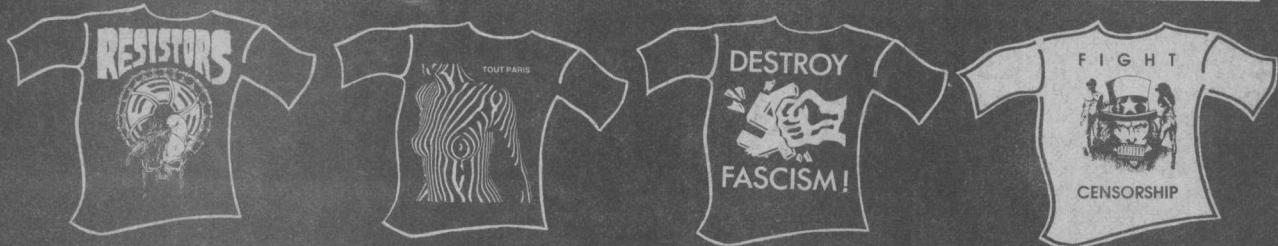
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DESTINATION ZERO 'SUICIETY': An overwhelming debut album somewhere in between HC and Metal but neither one. The band describes its music as "high energy Rock 'n' Roll" - which is a load of melodic bass, a thick wall of aggressive guitars and very powerful, melodic vocals Danzig only can dream of.

BITZCORE RECORDS / GERMANY



RESISTORS: 'Force Of Habit': This brand new release shows the fast development of the band - faster and harder HC / Punk / Hard Rock Crossover with melodic, powerful Danzig like vocals. This kick ass metal influenced Ian Burgess production (Naked Raygun, Big Black...) will blow your head off.

WE BITE RECORDS / GERMANY



FOREHEAD 'Self Titled': Finally it's here - the vinyl debut of Forehead. Heavier, harder, crazier and louder than their first tape release. This single is driving you insane with manic vocals and HC rhythms. Comes with cool fold out lyric sheet & poster.

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